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CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE

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CHRIST

THE BREAD OF LIFE

AN ATTEMPT TO GIVE A PROFITABLE DIRECTION TO THE PRESENT OCCUPATION OF THOUGHT WITH ROMANISM

BY

JOHN M'LEOD CAMPBELL, D.D.

SECOND EDITION

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

THE INFALLIBILITY OF THE CHURCH and TRANSUBSTANTIATION are to Protestants the most repulsive aspects of the teaching of the Church of Rome.—Yet they are also her great attractions to those who pass over to her from Protestantism; and, once accepted, form her strongest hold upon them.

The explanation of this seeming contradiction appears to me to be that, however open to obvious and palpable objections these two doctrines are,—the one as making a logically inconsistent demand on reason, the other as opposed to sense,—they offer themselves as severally meeting deep cravings of humanity—cravings which may be so strong as to tempt to a blind grasping at what promises to satisfy, in spite of all protestations of sense and reason.

As to the doctrine of the Infallibility of the

Church, which is made the gate by which all must enter in,—Cardinal Wiseman representing the Church as a city to which many roads lead but which has but this one gate,—this doctrine promises the peace and rest of certainty to minds seeking a sure knowledge of God. Dr. Newman says that if it was the purpose of God to give us certain knowledge of Himself, such a purpose implied the gift of an Infallible Church. The answer seems obvious—that such an Infallible Church would need a witness of God to her infallibility other than herself to justify the faith she asks from us. And, besides, if we consider it, any assumed impossibility in God's imparting certain knowledge of Himself to individual man would be the impossibility of Revelation at all.

But such answers, though just, offer nothing that can meet the craving for certain knowledge of God, for however they cast doubt on the claim made for the Church they offer no other guide to certainty. For the question here is not one as to the authority of Scripture, but as to the sure understanding of Scripture; and to

substitute the right of private judgment for the right of the Church to interpret with authority, is to leave the seeker for certainty to depend for certainty ultimately on his own judgment as to what the Scriptures teach. Now we can understand that one judging to the best of his ability may feel his conscience discharged, and may say, "If I am in error I at least am not blameably so." But this is altogether different from a *justifiable certainty* in holding what we believe. Nevertheless while the craving for certain knowledge is not yet awakened, and the free exercise of independent thought is enjoyed without misgiving, this distinction, however important and undeniable, is not duly considered. But it is otherwise when conflicting interpretations of Scripture perplex the searcher for truth, and he anxiously asks "What am I to believe?" No rebutting of the claims of Romanism by the exposure of the vicious circle which asks faith for the Church on the authority of Scripture, and asks faith for Scripture on the authority of the Church, can do more for such a man than at

the most to shut him up to uncertainty as to a necessity to which he must submit. But is such a necessity what the heart crying out for God, even the living God, can submit to?—making, as it would, intelligent worship impossible, and God the unknown God.

How, then, is the unwarranted claim to guide us set up by the Church of Rome to be *satisfactorily* dealt with?—Not in the negative way of urging the contradiction that is in that claim, but by directing faith to the living God as Himself the teacher who gives us certain knowledge of Himself. "It is written in the Prophets 'They shall be all taught of God.'". "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

So, also, as to Transubstantiation. The craving to which Transubstantiation addresses itself is not so obvious as that craving for light to which the doctrine of the Infallibility of the Church is addressed. Yet as Christ is the de-

sire—unconsciously—of all nations, so the words "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," must be the recognition of a true need of humanity. To the dim, unenlightened feeling of this need the Church of Rome presents the Eucharist with the faith of Transubstantiation, and the blind hunger felt makes welcome the assurance of the teacher already believed to be infallible, and the craving for Divine food and the craving for Divine light are combined in giving attraction to the Church's promises of such light and such food.

These misleading promises of the Church of Rome I have endeavoured (the latter here, the former in "Thoughts on Revelation") to present in the light of the truths the place of which they usurp. And this I have attempted in the first place with the hope of offering help to those who feel these attractions to Romanism too strong to be overcome by direct arguments addressed to sense and reason; and, in the second place, and chiefly, with the desire to quicken interest in the Truth itself; which further end is

what I contemplate as "giving a profitable direction to the present occupation of men's thoughts with Romanism."

It will be an important gain if, in seeking to deliver the Lord's Supper from that deceptive though solemn interest with which the doctrine of Transubstantiation has invested it, and from the perversion which renders it a substitute for the true feeding upon Christ, I do something towards restoring it to that function and that value which it had in the Church at the beginning, by vindicating for it its true character as a Divine symbol having power to deepen and strengthen faith in the truth which it symbolizes, and, as a witness for the source and manner of our participation in Eternal Life, having a Divine fitness to nourish and develope that life in us.

PARTICK, *December*, 1868.

CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE.

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."—PSALM xxiii. 5.

OUR relation to Christ as our life has these two expressions given to it in the records of our Lord's teaching preserved for us by the Evangelist St. John. Our Lord says "I am the vine ye are the branches," and He says "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever." Our dependance on the Son of God for the Eternal Life given to us in Him is thus likened to vegetable life as that is present in a branch, the sap flowing into it from the tree, and to animal life, as that is sustained by the eating of food.

The intention of this teaching is undeniably *practical*, viz., *guidance as to that exercise of our*

WILL to which our God has given the place of being *the link between the high purpose of His love for us and the accomplishment of that purpose in us.* The reference to vegetable life does not of itself so suggest movements of will as that to animal life. There is nothing of the nature of will in the abiding of branches in the tree—there is in eating. But the words "Abide in me" spoken to us as branches add what the thought of the passing of life into the branch from the tree does not of itself suggest. We are branches, but branches to which it belongs to choose whether they will abide in the vine, and, as such, motives for abiding are addressed to us. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

What I desire now to keep in view is that practical purpose which I believe our Lord to have contemplated: and because of the evil that has arisen from the error of believing the words in which He represents the life of faith as feeding on Himself to have been spoken in

reference to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, I shall consider, First, this error and what has been involved in it; Second, I shall then endeavour to illustrate the life of faith considered in itself in that aspect of it on which I understand our Lord to have been fixing our attention, viz., as movements of the will in response to the divine will in Christ—our living by Him as He by the Father; Third, I shall in conclusion offer some thoughts on the development of the Mass of Romanism from the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, so far as that development affects faith in Christ as the Bread of Life.

FIRST,—*Relation of the Lord's Supper to the Life of Faith.*

That Christ is the Bread of Life expresses that which from the beginning has been the inmost aspect of the Divine Life in man: therefore songs of praise which have come down to us from the earlier dispensation fit themselves to our experience as Christians; as very specially the 23rd Psalm. We know not in what circum-

stances the faith here seen triumphing was originally exercised, or what measure of the light of Eternal Life is to be recognised in it. But in the fullest light of Eternal Life to which we attain we can use it as the natural expression of our experience of salvation. In some Psalms the conflicts recorded and the deliverances and victories for which thanks are given have so much of the impress of a lower dispensation upon them that we experience difficulty in using their language in a higher and more spiritual reference; but in this Psalm it is different. There is no room here for the objection sometimes urged, that our use of the language of the warrior-king of Israel, who loses not that character as the sweet singer of Israel, is an unwarranted spiritualizing of language not originally so intended. For as to this Psalm we may say that it is spiritualized to our hand:—as when the being led in "*green pastures* and by *still waters*" is interpreted as "*restoring the soul*," "*leading in the paths of righteousness.*" We feel ourselves here called to

communion with a spirit that is hungering and thirsting after righteousness: we cannot think otherwise of one who has learned to regard all outward paths, however some of these might be in themselves "not joyous but grievous," as "green pastures and still waters," *because* to his spirit "paths of righteousness." Nor can we doubt that to this man the sweet taste of righteousness has had in it the element of Eternity—the consciousness of having chosen the better part which is not taken from those who make choice of it. So we understand his confident expectation, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

For the meat which endures unto Eternal Life has ever been the same,—Christ the Bread of Life, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. This is the testimony of God, that God has given to us Eternal Life and that this life is in His Son. This in the Spirit, is ever the testimony of the Father of our spirits. "Thou hast

been our dwelling-place in all generations" are the opening words of that Psalm which is presented to us as "a prayer of Moses the man of God;" and coming to us across the ages it unites its teaching with that of the Apostle, that "in God we live and move and have our being" —for "we are all His offspring." The light of the early dawn is one with that of noon-day, and when faith in God is seen producing and sustaining a peaceful realization of existence in one having the sense of his own mortality, the essence of such peace must from the beginning have been that which it is now.

I therefore feel in communion with the Psalmist, while in the more perfect light now shining I accept the expression of his faith as meet for our use, and to these thoughts on "Christ the Bread of Life" prefix his words "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." The table here spoken of is that spiritual table, the food on which is that bread of life which hath come down from heaven. The enemies in whose presence it is spread are

the various elements of that fear of death through which we were all our lifetime subject to bondage. The transition of thought is from the sense of freedom from fear in "walking through the valley of the shadow of death" to the recognition of the source of that freedom, viz., our participation in the Eternal Life given to us in the Son of God. And the form of the language has reference to the manner of that participation, viz., our eating His flesh and drinking His blood.

The teaching of our Lord in the light of which we thus use the Psalmist's words we have in the Gospel of St. John, Chap. vi. 27 to 58. The passage is one which arrests attention and which, even while it is felt to be imperfectly understood, is vividly remembered. Our Lord's earnestness and urgency cause us to feel that what He is teaching is of fundamental importance, while the form of expression which He employs is not only solemn but in some sense mysterious, or at least what makes a peculiar demand for spiritual intelligence. The difficulty experienced by those

to whom the words were originally addressed, and the way in which our Lord met their murmuring,—reiterating the statement at which they stumbled instead of explaining it,—contributes to this feeling of mystery, which is still further deepened by the intimation that those alone could understand it who were specially taught of God.

Yet the teaching is what we cannot turn away from. We cannot rest peacefully in ignorance of its meaning. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood ye have no life in you." Here there is a requirement which must be understood in order to be obeyed, while obedience involves the issue of Eternal Life. We ask and we cannot put from us the enquiry "what is it to eat the flesh and to drink the blood of Christ?" while our Lord deepens the solemn interest which He is awakening when He adds "As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me even he shall live by me." But these words, while they deepen the

interest only increase the mystery, and the more simply and earnestly we set ourselves to understand, the more we feel that if we are to understand we must, as we are told, be taught of God.

Rightly considered, the imperative necessity for our understanding, along with the need of divine teaching that we may understand, awaken the expectation that God will teach us. Our Lord's words to the murmuring Jews we must see to have been not words of rebuke only, but of guidance also; and we are saved from joining in their murmuring, and welcome the guidance which they did not accept. "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." "It is written in the prophets 'They shall be all taught of God.'" "Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me." I say we shall accept this promise of Divine teaching, for such it is. Nothing else could meet us here. Our Lord's exposition of the manner of the life of faith is a demand for spiritual intelligence which

we can only propose to ourselves to respond to in the remembrance and faith of His own words "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children how much more will your Heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

It has, I know, come to pass amongst us that intimations of our dependence upon Divine teaching for light are felt rather as perplexing than as encouraging; arresting us by a practical difficulty rather than setting our feet in a large place; intimating a necessity for a miracle rather than declaring a Divine constitution of humanity, to the freedom and blessedness of which we are called to rise. But of such a feeling we find no trace at the beginning. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Here is no shadow of difficulty in harmonizing the call upon us to work with the faith that God is working in us.

I feel no difficulty in cherishing the expectation of entering into the light of our Lord's words

while realizing that to this end I must be taught of God. I could not cherish that expectation otherwise. But it is important to consider the aspect which the passage now engaging our attention presents, when in connection with it our need of Divine teaching that we may understand is so emphatically impressed on us. Does not this imply that the subject of our Lord's teaching here is peculiarly *spiritual* and only to be *spiritually discerned*,—the same impression which we receive when He says "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life."

But before proceeding to illustrate the character of the life of faith as a feeding on Christ the bread of life, I must stop to notice an interpretation of what I am now accepting as our Lord's special teaching on this subject, which, if just, would preclude my so using it. Not that so important an aspect of the life of faith could

be presented to us in one passage only, so that the loss of this passage would leave it in darkness. What we are here taught pervades the teaching of the Lord and of His Apostles, but we cannot give up the peculiar and most explicit setting-forth of the teaching here, more especially as the demand on us to do so is the demand to accept an interpretation which would introduce a new element into Christianity, and such an element as wars with the elements which our faith already accepts—so wars with them as to render the attempt to combine it with them like the attempt to serve two masters.

The other interpretation to which I refer represents our Lord as here speaking not of the life of faith, but of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, accepting His discourse as prophetic, and having as its object to declare the important place and function which that ordinance was to have in His future Church. This is the interpretation adopted by the Church of Rome.

I believe the relation of the passage in question and of the Lord's Supper to each other to

be simply this, that they both refer to the same spiritual reality, that ordinance setting forth *in act* what this passage sets forth *in word. They both declare the manner of the life which is by the faith of the Son of God*, using our experience of the conscious process of eating and drinking to illustrate the self-appropriating movements of the will in receiving and in feeding upon the spiritual food which is our Lord's broken body and shed blood; thus helping us to conceive of the intimacy of our union with Christ, and of the literal truth of the expression "partaking in Him," through our knowledge of what the food which we eat is to the body which it nourishes. By both, I say, are we thus taught, and of our profitable meditation of the one, and of our worthy participation of the other, the fruit is one and the same; viz., living obedience to the guidance which the Lord's words bestow; living conformity with the meaning of the symbolical act, in which, at His command, we have engaged.

Our Lord's teaching of the life of faith as a feeding upon His flesh and blood, and the light

shed upon that life by the ordinance of the Lord's Supper being thus identical, we ought ever to combine that teaching and this ordinance in our thoughts;—the ordinance helping us to realize the practical demand which the teaching makes, and the teaching helping us to engage in the ordinance, in that light in which alone it can be the communion of the body and blood of Christ, and so be that strengthening to our spirits which it has been Divinely fitted for being. So it was at the beginning, for to the experience of this strengthening we trace the frequent use of the Eucharist in the Early Church. Such aid in fighting the good fight of faith, being conformed to the death of Christ, *they* could not fail to value who were so literally dying daily.

But the common relation of the passage we are considering and of the Lord's Supper to the life of faith not being recognised, and that interpretation which represents the former as prophetic of the latter being accepted, these consequences follow,—1st, we no longer receive

this portion of our Lord's teaching as shedding light on the life of faith and parallel with the words, "I am the vine ye are the branches." "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." And 2nd, we no longer have light shed on the manner of the life of faith by the ordinance of the Supper; the character of that ordinance being entirely changed when it is represented as itself the subject of such words as, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." This double loss, though negative, will still if realized be found to be very great. But it is the positive result of the change of interpretation to which I am anxious to direct attention—that result which I have ventured to call the introduction of a new element into Christianity and one that wars with what we know Christianity to be.

A new element is introduced into Christianity when the words "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life

in you" are understood to be spoken of the Lord's Supper, for now that ordinance claims to be the medium of our participation in Christ—that apart from which we have no life in us. *An ordinance which bore witness to the nature of the life of faith* has become *a mystery embodying spiritual life in material elements.*—I believe that a true spiritual discernment could in the contemplation of this change anticipate what the historical development of it has made too certain; viz., that in its new character, the Lord's Supper as the Mass would absorb in itself the interest which Christ has to us as our Life.

When we consider this matter closely, the first thing which we realize is, that there is a demand made upon us for another manner of faith than that which apprehends Christ and the grace of God in the gospel of our salvation.

The apostle Paul describes himself as, in preaching the gospel, "By manifestation of the truth commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Of what takes place in the reception of the gospel, he speaks

thus, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Of subsequent progress in the Divine Life, he says, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Faith, therefore, as respects the first commencement of the life of faith, and as respects its subsequent progress, is an apprehending, and a growing in the apprehension of, the glory of God in the Gospel; and so it is a passing into and an advancing in light; and that light the highest, a seeing light in God's Light.

But the faith which the Lord's Supper demands, when that ordinance is presented, not as a witness to the manner of life of which Christ is the food, but as itself the appointed medium through which that food is received, is the faith of a mystery,—of a mystery, not in the sense of something hid from ages and generations, and in due time revealed, but in the sense of something

incapable of manifestation; and so it is a faith which receives in the dark, in simple reliance on authority, and which, in the same reliance, continues holding in the dark what it understands not nor apprehends, neither expects to understand or apprehend.

It is said, "the peculiar and appropriate faith here is the faith of the words, 'This is my body,' 'This is my blood.'" I believe that this assertion is not warranted. The faith proper to the ordinance, and in the exercise of which alone it has vitality, is the faith of that which the ordinance means and expresses, viz., the faith, that Christ's flesh is meat indeed, and His blood drink indeed; and *not* the faith that this bread is Christ's flesh, and this wine is Christ's blood. But, assuming that the faith here called for is the faith of the assertion supposed to be made in the words, "This is my body," "This is my blood," such faith is faith, not as to a spiritual truth spiritually discerned, but as to a physical mystery, not discerned, but assumed on authority. Such faith, supposing it to be required

from us, is still manifestly distinct from the faith which apprehends the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The distinction, which I expect to be recognized when thus put, between the faith which receives a physical mystery and the faith which apprehends a spiritual truth, is a difference in kind, not in degree. The physical mystery seems greatest, in the form which the doctrine has in the Church of Rome. The measure of the corresponding faith called for is therefore greatest there also. But, as to modifications of Transubstantiation, under the name of Consubstantiation, or some other name yet undetermined, there is but a difference of degree, so long as it is held that the faith required from us, in partaking of this ordinance, is the faith of the assertion supposed to be contained in the words, "This is my body," "This is my blood." Say to me, "You must believe that *literally* this is Christ's body," or say to me, "You must believe that *mystically* this is Christ's body," the important fact remains, that what I am required to

exercise is, a faith about the bread and the wine as the medium in which I receive Christ, and *not* a faith that simply contemplates Christ, and realizes that He is my life.

I say the faith which the less startling forms of thought on this subject call for, is the same in nature with that which receives Transubstantiation, differing only in degree. But, inasmuch as Transubstantiation is the fullest development of this conception of the ordinance, and the physical mystery greatest so presented, there is an attraction which Transubstantiation has to minds that have once come to conceive of special glory to God in the faith of mystery, which the modifications of it have not; or rather I should say, the cravings which they in measure feed it alone can satisfy. If the very essence of the faith exercised, and of the glory given to God in exercising it, be, that I believe on authority that which is not light to me, but altogether darkness, each ray of light shed on the object of such faith, if light could be shed upon it, would just diminish by so much the amount of the

demand for faith, and, therefore, the amount of glory to God, which it is put in my power to give. And all modification of the Roman Catholic doctrine is but the attempt to let some rays of light fall upon it. Therefore the endeavour of those who say "here is a mystery," and still attempt to qualify the mystery by such comparisons as that to the presence of the soul in the body is self-contradictory. They are trying to satisfy what they would call a sceptical craving, at the same time that they are demanding an implicit faith; and in proportion as that demand for implicit faith awakens a response in their disciples, will the attempt at explanation not only lose interest, but become distasteful. And hence the fact, that earnest mental occupation with this matter is so often found to end in Romanism; while those who have first given the downward impetus to the stone, stand wondering and lamenting that it rolls so far.

We know that, in the mind of every Romanist, one very peculiar claim to the adhesion of Christians possessed by his Church is, that that

Church, and that Church alone, has the bread of life to administer to the faithful; this language being used with reference to Transubstantiation: and I have known the claim so urged, the first attraction of the Church of Rome to Protestants who have eventually become Romanists. And when the teaching of our Lord in the words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," is understood as having the Lord's Supper as its subject; and when, in harmony with this interpretation, the words of the institution itself, "This is my body," "This is my blood," are understood as demanding the faith as to the elements of bread and wine, that they are the Lord's body and blood, I cannot wonder at such a result,—the Romanist form of the doctrine being at least simpler and more self-consistent.

I do not forget the argument against Transubstantiation, that it not only is a mystery, but also contradicts our senses. To ask me to believe in the dark, is not certainly to go so far as to ask me to believe in contradiction to what

I naturally feel to be light; and this disadvantage Transubstantiation seems to have, as compared with other conceptions of the actual presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Nor would I make light of the confidence with which any fellow Protestant appeals to our bodily senses, in his rejection of Transubstantiation. But, inasmuch as our bodily senses are certainly not our highest faculties of perception, I feel that the contradiction it presents to them, does not weigh more with me,—I would say, does not weigh so much with me as the contradiction it presents to a higher endowment with which God has endowed man, viz., that faculty of perception which distinguishes him as a spiritual being—the inhabitant not merely of a physical, but of a spiritual universe—that in man which makes him capable of knowledge not of nature only, but of nature's God. What is the physical sense of hearing in comparison with that spiritual sense which is addressed when our Lord says to us, "Hear and your soul shall live?" What the sight that makes the light of the sun available,

in comparison with that which enables us to rejoice in the light of the Sun of Righteousness? When partaking of the Lord's Supper, I, by my bodily senses, take cognizance of the bread and wine, and know what they are, as I consciously partake of them; while, in my spiritual nature, I deal with the spiritual realities which they symbolize, and discern the Lord's body broken for me, His blood shed for the remission of my sins, which I thankfully receive, and consciously feed upon, as the spiritual food of the Divine Life. The two conjoined processes are quite distinct. They are both experienced realities. In neither is there any mystery. Nothing is assumed to be what it is not felt and proved to be. If, as to the first part of this experience, I may have sufficient confidence in my bodily senses to refuse on their testimony to believe that what seemed bread and wine were not bread and wine, but were transubstantiated into the actual flesh and blood of Christ, I feel at least equally authorised in the confidence which justly accompanies the exercise of spiritual

perception, to believe that the spiritual realities which I have spiritually discerned, the spiritual food of which I have consciously partaken, was just what to my spiritual apprehension it appeared; existing as a spiritual existence altogether in the region of spirit, and not clothed with a material form, or existing in the material substance which to the outward senses is bread and wine.

Of course there is this difference between the contradiction which Transubstantiation presents to the spiritual sense, and that which it presents to the bodily senses, that *all* see the bread and wine, and may feel entitled to say, "these are but bread and wine," while the spiritual realities, which they represent, are seen only by those who exercise spiritual vision. But, assuming that a man has both these preparations for dealing with this matter, and while his bodily senses bear to him the testimony that they bear to all men, that his spiritual eye is opened to see the appropriate food of Eternal Life presented to him in Christ, I believe that such a

man's spiritual perceptions afford to him as direct a contradiction to the doctrine of Transubstantiation as his physical perceptions do. Now, though the modifications of the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the elements to which I have referred, cease to contradict our bodily senses as directly as Transubstantiation does, they continue to contradict our spiritual perceptions, the perceptions which pertain to our higher nature, and to that region in which Christ and eternal life are seen and known.

Those who have gone along with me thus far may feel that I have said enough to justify my estimate of the evil involved in interpreting the words of our Lord, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," as referring to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

Yet some, from a deep sense of our mental limits and of the danger of being unduly influenced by the inability to form consistent and harmonious views, may be disposed to say, "No doubt the manner of faith, which receives the

words, 'This is my body,' 'This is my blood,' as literally or mystically true of the bread and the wine, is distinct from the faith that receives Christ, nor is the exercise of the former within the region of spiritual intelligence. But may not both these faiths be required from us? May we not, as to our ordinary experience, be called to the direct faith of Christ, while as to the Lord's Supper we are called to faith in the mystery of His presence in the bread and the wine? And may not, as to both demands, the obedience of faith be due from us?"

My difficulty as to such a combination is spiritual rather than intellectual, and belongs to the experience of the life of faith.

Without anticipating the direct exposition of the meaning of feeding upon Christ, I ask you to endeavour to realize, using what materials for so doing your experience may afford, the consciousness that accompanies that obedience of faith which is the reception of the gospel—your consciousness in receiving the record that God has given to us Eternal Life in his Son. In

this exercise of faith is not the Eternal Life seen by you in Christ? Are not its elements the objects of spiritual apprehension? Is not their relation to your own inner man spiritually intelligible? Is not the movement of your own being in which you appropriate them a *conscious* movement? Is not the participation in Eternal Life which results—the being spiritually quickened, also a conscious experience? And, in all the variety of connection with outward means of grace in which this experience is known, is it not universally one and the same? In relation to joy or to sorrow, when engaged in active duty or in solitary meditation, dealing with men in the name of Christ or drawing near to the Father in that name,—in all things is not Christ the same? Eternal Life the same? the renewing of your inner man essentially one process? —that essential oneness being at once the reason of the command, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," and the ground of the assurance "that all things work together for good to them that love God."

I ask you thus to realize the life of faith, in its outward variety, in its inward oneness, and then to consider what you are required to combine with this experience as another manner of feeding upon Christ, when you are called to believe that Christ and Eternal Life are presented to you in the Lord's Supper in the bread and the wine. The combination proposed you will find impossible. You may pass from the one manner of faith to the other, but in so doing you will not be continuing to receive the one Eternal Life. The sap of the vine will not be felt to flow into you in the exercise of this new faith, as it did in that of the faith which you have hitherto cherished. Proceed, with careful self-conscious discernment of the conditions of your own spirit, and you will speedily find that no setting yourself to believe about the bread and the wine that Christ is in them literally or mystically can feed that life into the fellowship of which the *direct* faith of Christ had introduced you, and which all exercise of the same faith had nourished and strengthened. Every other employment to

which God has called you, and in which you have engaged as a Christian man, has been found to be what you could so engage in as in it to be consciously feeding upon Christ. But in that which is now proposed to you this consciousness can no longer accompany you. Though you submit your mind to the mystery presented to you—though you believe, however inconceivable the assumption seems, that Christ is in the bread and the wine—still there is no consciousness of feeding upon Christ. Your acceptance of this mystery in no degree adds to what the meditation of the work of Christ has wrought in your spirit; nor does this gazing on darkness—however solemn and awful the darkness—forward that progress in the Divine Life to which you were conscious while "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord."

This then is the difficulty, viz., the experience of the impossibility of feeding through the faith of this mystery that conscious Eternal Life which has been quickened and nourished by the direct faith of Christ.

I have said, that when the language of our Lord in the 6th chapter of St. John, with reference to the life of faith, is interpreted as the exposition of the nature and function of the Lord's Supper, that ordinance "ceases to be a testimony to our relation to the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls, and becomes, so to speak, the rival of that word as the food of Eternal Life." It may be asked, how can it be the rival of the living word as the food of Eternal Life, if practically it proves not to be food for that life at all?

Certainly this seeming contradiction could not arise *if* the *true conception* of *Eternal Life* were adhered to, and a *spiritual discernment freely exercised* as to the result of attempting to sustain that life by this manner of food. But, in point of fact, the seeming contradiction is presented to us; and it arises in this way. The recognition of the Lord's Supper as the medium of Eternal Life, in virtue of the assumed actual presence of Christ in the bread and wine, involves a *new conception of the nature of Eternal Life.* For it

becomes necessary to believe not only that Christ is in that in which He is not discerned to be, but also that Christ is fed upon while there is no consciousness of feeding upon Him; so that the fact of our being fed comes to be as much taken on trust as the fact of Christ's presence in that which we eat and drink—both facts being alike assumed as parts of the one mystery. But this being granted, as a man believes that Christ is in the bread and the wine, so he believes that, having partaken of the bread and the wine, he has fed upon Christ. To ask a man to take this experience to the light of the experience of feeding upon Christ by faith is to demand light where the essential character of the experience is *taking upon trust in the dark.* And the question "Are you consciously fed?" would be as irrelevant as to ask "Do you discern Christ's presence in the bread and the wine?"

And thus an ordinance which does not consciously feed Eternal Life may become, and does become, the rival of the engrafted word which does; because the faith exercised dispenses

with such consciousness, and permits and authorizes the conviction that without that consciousness we are experiencing the fulfilment of these words, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life."

I say the ordinance may become, and does become the rival of the living word. For this I believe to be the true conception of the relation in which they come to stand to each other: and that the ultimate ground of objection to that conception of the ordinance against which I contend is that it makes it the antagonist of Christ.

Viewed on the side on which I have at present approached it such a rival to the true bread of life may appear little formidable; for I have contemplated its claims as they will appear to one having experience of the life of faith, and clear discernment of the nature of that life. One so prepared to deal with the subject ought not to be in much danger. But in the absence of such experience, or even where there is a measure of that experience in the

absence of such discernment, the danger is not small.

I have spoken of the powerlessness of the faith of the presence of Christ in the bread and wine, to yield to the spirit of man what the direct faith of Christ yields; but I have not spoken of what it has power to yield. I have used the expression "solemn and awful darkness" in speaking of that on which this faith calls us to gaze, instead of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. How solemn and awful we may not easily realize when not actually (as we dare not be,) cherishing the faith of that mystery. But we can understand that to believe that Christ is in the bread and the wine is to see these material substances invested with an overawing Divinity, before which our souls prostrate themselves as before God; that to proceed to take the material substance of which we so conceive into our lips is to perform an act of deep mysterious interest, with which there naturally are combined thoughts of marvellous condescension on the part of God—of inconceivable

obligation on our own part; and that to reflect on what has taken place, and that now that word is fulfilled in us—"Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath Eternal Life; and I will raise him up at the last day," is to feel emboldened to cherish peace and confident hope as to the invisible and the eternal; while all this combination of awe, and thankfulness, and triumphant hope, is sealed to us by the persuasion, that to doubt the reality of the grounds on which it rests, would be to doubt the power and truth of God.

Now here are elements of an experience which, while it has no claim to be called Christian experience or fellowship in the life of Christ, may yet too easily be accepted as religion, and earnest and solemn religion too, even where Christian experience is not unknown. How much more easily where serious emotions and experiences of awe and veneration are all that the human spirit has yet recognised in itself as religion; and of how many esteemed by them-

selves and by others religious may this be all that can be said!

But that which enhances the danger and makes it to extend widely is that however antagonistic this faith of Christ's presence in the ordinance is to the direct faith of Christ revealed in us the hope of glory, and however antagonistic this taking for granted that we are partaking in the food of Eternal Life is to looking for and resting in the testimony of the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, still it is *not* as something *instead of*, but as something *besides* the faith of the gospel that the faith of this mystery is inculcated; and so men not discerning the contradiction may attempt to combine both.

I believe such an attempt to be the attempt to serve two masters. If any reply and say, "No, for surely some have combined both;" if this be spoken with reference to men of God within the Church of Rome, or other churches holding cognate views in this matter, I say the day of the Lord will reveal what has been indeed that

feeding upon Christ through which they have come to bear His image—what of that which they held has determined what they were, and what had no part in that result.

As to what I have at present characterised *as two*, and *mutually opposed* services, there is abundant historical evidence, that in proportion as the food of life is believed to be received in the bread and wine, it is less and less sought through belief of the truth. Nay, in proportion as that is conceived of as the highest act of religion, and the act in which there is assumed to be the most absolute participation in Christ which is most entirely away from the region of consciousness and of spiritual discernment, that region loses its interest, and men withdraw from it. We find it more and more spoken of as a region of mists and uncertainties, a region in which no clear light shines, a region where no voice gives forth a certain sound, or speaks with authority; insomuch, that he who would attain to certainty, and feel his feet on a rock, is told that he must turn elsewhere than inward. The voice of the Living

Word being thus treated as an uncertain sound, the way is prepared for obedience to an external authority, and the perplexed spirit seeking repose and rest is fain to welcome the church claiming to be infallible, and, in despair of attaining to the light of spiritual vision, to still itself and be silent in the darkness of implicit faith.

To me it appears that there is a mutual relation between this doctrine of the real presence and the doctrine of the infallibility of the church of a most instructive and warning kind; and that, while the belief of the real presence invests the church which inculcates it with the highest claim on the homage of the faithful that can be conceived, that belief could never have been offered to men but by a church claiming to be infallible, or be received but in the faith of that infallibility.

But apart from the testimony of observation or history, looking at the subject in the clear light of our life in Christ I can have no doubt as to the true character of that against which I contend. For I can have no doubt that the

attitude of the human spirit in cherishing the faith of the presence of Christ in the bread and wine, and in assuming that partaking of them is partaking of Christ, *is not any form of obedience to the words*—"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me:" or the words—"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life:" or the words—"Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls:" and, therefore, neither can I doubt that, not being any form of that obedience of faith which is thus called for, and yet making the high and solemn claim which it does make, its relation to that obedience of faith is that of a rival and substitute. When Luther, at one stage in his progress, said, that "if the Pope would permit him to preach Justification by faith, he would not object to the Mass," he understood not how certainly Justification by faith is subversive of the Mass, and of all conceptions of the Lord's Supper which have

a common root with the Mass, and which ask for the right participation in that ordinance a faith so alien to that which receives the gospel of the grace of God. Those with whom Luther contended had an instinctive feeling—probably beyond their own clear intelligence in the matter—of the danger to which his preaching of Justification by faith exposed the whole hold of their church upon the minds of men, and especially that which they felt, and justly, to be its strongest hold of men—that Mass to which he thus disclaimed hostility. The fear at present entertained, by those whose confidence is Justification by faith, of the leaven of Romanism working in the land may be more instinctive than intelligent; traditional also it may be—doubtless is with many; while in many, we may hope, it is the discernment that this is another gospel, which yet is not a gospel. But, whether more or less enlightened, I believe that the fear does not in degree exceed the danger; nor, however inoperative and so far innocuous the doctrine of the real presence may have been, received by

tradition and held among the mere forms of thought, can I, when it is seen, as now, attracting awakened minds, and sought unto for comfort and hope towards God, and renewal of strength for the daily conflict of life, regard it but as evil beyond the worst apprehensions which it has awakened. Christ is the desire of all nations. All men have in them a craving which Christ alone can truly satisfy. Yet, alas! how often is this desire, unenlightened, unguided, just that which moves men to meet, with hasty and unwarranted response, the cry, "Lo! here is Christ, lo! there is Christ!" The warning of our Lord in regard to that cry—"Go not after them, nor follow them," may have reference to other and yet future forms of danger to His church; but according to the spirit of that warning do I believe it to be, to treat the assumption of the actual presence of Christ in the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, as one form of that danger.

I have used the name, "the Mass," as that given to the Lord's Supper in the church of

Rome, while I have only referred to part of what constitutes the Mass of Romanism, and gives its high place to that service in the worship of Romanists. For the Mass consists of two parts: that receiving and feeding upon the material substance assumed to be transubstantiated into the body and blood of the Lord which corresponds to what Protestants call the Communion; and the offering up to God in worship, and as the mean of procuring the highest outcomings of divine mercy, that same material substance as to which this faith is cherished, which is called the unbloody sacrifice, or eucharistic offering of Christ. And this other part of the service of the Mass attracted more of the attention of the reformers than that which has now been considered; for it took to their minds the form of a renewal of sacrificial offering for sin, to the depreciation of the one and all-sufficient offering of Christ, who, once in the end of the world, hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Now, the eucharistic offering appears to me a

natural development of the Lord's Supper, *seen in the light of Transubstantiation;* and as such I would now notice it, because the appearance of this development still farther illustrates how the faith of the doctrine of the real presence renders participation in the ordinance a substitute for, instead of a witness to the life of faith.

That which was believed to be through Transubstantiation the body and blood of the Lord, men fed upon as the food of Eternal Life. It was also offered to God as the highest worship drawing forth the highest grace (for, doubtless, that effect on the condition of spirits out of the body which they contemplate in that offering, they regarded as the highest form of answer to prayer). I ask, is not this as a whole consistent with itself, and the one part as naturally related to the faith of Transubstantiation as the other? I trust the reader may regard the whole subject with too solemn a sense of its importance to deal lightly with any part of it because of its incongruity with our habits of thought. If Christ is conceived to be so truly present, where to sense

is but a material substance, that He may therein be fed upon by the human spirit; to one so conceiving, what coming to God in the name of Christ, or asking mercies for Christ's sake, or presenting of Christ to the Father as the ground of expectation of the answer of prayer, can be more fitting than that of the eucharistic offering? Feeding upon Christ, and worshipping God through Christ, are so related that what we understand to be the first of these will always determine our conception of the other also. With very different measures of spiritual apprehension are the expressions—"accepting Christ as a Saviour,"—"receiving him as the bread of life, which hath come down from heaven,"—employed by Protestants; which may be also said of our use of the expressions—"praying in Christ's name,"—"trusting for the answer of our prayers to Christ's merits," but the meaning of the former language, as used by any individual, determines, as to his use of it, the meaning of the latter also. As these two several attitudes of the human spirit

are related to each other in the experience of Protestants, so to Romanists are the two parts of the service of the Mass mutually related. The parallel between what we know in ourselves and what we see in the Mass will be more and more apparent to us in proportion as our experience of Christianity is more truly the fellowship of the life of Christ. What we receive from God, in Christ, as Eternal Life, is what, being fed upon, and so becoming our own actual life, we offer to God in worship. Our life ascends to God in worship. And it is its being the Divine nature—its being the Eternal Life, that is the secret of the acceptableness of the worship, and of the sureness of the response to it. The *life* which we are living is *lived*, so to speak, *in our being led by the Spirit of God*, and, therefore, the *worshipping form* of this life is, *worship in spirit and in truth.* We are *born of the will of God*, and we, therefore, *ask things according to His will, and He heareth us.* Thus is it the mind of Christ which we present to the Father. Thus is Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered

Himself without spot to God, and was accepted as the one and sufficient sacrifice for sin, presented anew in all prayers of Christians, in so far as these are a participation in the spirit of Christ—a form of the life of Christ in them. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious; ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Knowing thus, in ourselves, the relation which the spiritual reality of worship bears to the spiritual reality of feeding upon Christ, we understand how the belief of the doctrine of the actual presence has produced the Mass of Romanism *in both its parts*, and see, in the eucharistic offering, the substitute for that worship which is in spirit and in truth, as we saw in the other part of the service, in which the consecrated material substance is partaken of, the substitute for receiving with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save the soul.

The completeness of this parallelism greatly

tends to confirm the conviction that the one of these objects of contemplation is the counterpart of the other; and at the same time to strengthen the fear that, if the counterpart once begin to awaken an interest, and to be felt something to the mind because of what seeming religious feeling the faith of it sustains, its self-consistency and harmonious development will enable it to insinuate itself until it is received as a whole, and takes hold of the mind by all its parts. And of the likelihood of this there is striking evidence in the fact that *forms of thought* as to the Lord's Supper, one in nature with the faith of the Church of Rome, are just now seen developing themselves *into forms of service* that suggest the Mass, and are awakening on this ground the distrust of Protestants.

I have endeavoured to do all the justice which one not holding them can, to the views to which I have objected; and their completeness and self-consistency in that system in which they are fully developed has made this not difficult: so

that I hope that any intelligent Romanist would have no hesitation in recognizing the fairness of my representation. I believe, also, that those in whom that tendency to Romanism which at present awakens so much attention is manifested will recognize themselves in what I have intended as the statement of their mental position, however they may feel confident that still they run no risk of ending in Romanism, or however they may satisfy themselves with the line of separation which they draw between themselves and Romanists.

But the root of that which has been fully developed only in the Mass of Romanism is present and manifests its presence in Protestants much more widely than the limits of this movement. It may be discerned even in those sects of the Protestant Church which have gone furthest in their protest against the Church of Rome. And I fear I dare not assume that all those whose case this may be will easily recognize the application of what I have said to themselves. On the contrary, all such self-application is

likely to be precluded by the strong recoil from Romanism to which they are conscious. So long as the Mass offends them as both superstitious and idolatrous, how can they suspect that the elements of the interest which the Mass has to Romanists are present in the interest with which they themselves regard the Lord's Supper? So small is the likelihood that to any in this mental position my word will come with the arresting personal application, "Thou art the man," that I had almost withheld from the attempt so to press it home. But my remembrance of a comfort not in Christ, nor in the true communion of His body and blood which I have witnessed in connection with the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, where there has not been the least misgiving as to the truly Protestant character of the service, is too painful, and my sense of the danger to the spirits of men which it involved too deep to permit me to conclude without making some effort to awaken conscience in this solemn matter.

I have said, "a comfort not in Christ, nor in the

true communion of His body and blood." I use this language with reference to a comfort experienced through partaking of the Lord's Supper which does not flow from the exercise of faith in Christ, but from a vague persuasion of benefit derived from the ordinance itself because of some assumed virtue in it to promote man's peace with God, and strengthen the soul's hold on Christ; which persuasion, however undefined its grounds, invests the ordinance with the interest and importance of a medium of participation in Christ and means of salvation, and clothes the act of communion with a character of peculiar solemnity and peculiar acceptableness to God as a religious service; so that the Communion Table is left with a sense of relief to the conscience and a strengthened hope of the forgiveness of sins. When a manner of comfort the crude elements of which I thus endeavour to indicate is derived from the fact of participation in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, those so comforted being persons to whom the true spiritual apprehension of Christ is unknown, it is

too manifest that the place given to the ordinance is that of a substitute for the actual life of faith, and not, as it ought to be, of a witness to that life; for partaking in it is not—does not profess to be—a testimony as to what Christ is proved to be from day to day, a testimony as to the secret of a continuous life of which Christ is the food. On the contrary, it is clearly had recourse to as affording some vague mystical hope of keeping up through it an interest in Christ,—that Christ of a knowledge of whom the ordinary life gives no token. Surely the elements of the Mass are present in the Lord's Supper so used. And that it is widely so used in all the sects of Protestants, those in each several sect who know most of vital Christianity will be the most prepared to admit.

I doubt not that observant intelligent Romanists mark the same fact. To them, indeed, that fact will appear in a very different light from that in which it appears to me. They will regard it as indicating how Christians in all sects of Protestants are, though they know it not,

feeling the need of that which the Church of Rome alone has to give. They will look on these elements of the feelings with which they themselves regard the Mass thus appearing in connection with a form of doctrine on the subject of the Lord's Supper the most opposite to theirs, as proving how deep in humanity that craving is which thus utters its voice in spite of all intellectual protests against it in creeds and catechisms. And from a considerable depth in man it surely does come. For not of the visible, nor of man's temporal interests, nor of his relation to the creature does that voice speak; but of the invisible, of the eternal, of man's relation to God. Therefore is a certain reverence and consideration due to it. Yet, assuredly, that voice is not from the depths of humanity—those depths of which the Psalmist speaks, "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." That which utters itself thus widely, and not unfrequently with much earnestness and solemnity, still is not the experienced sense of the deepest ultimate need of man. It

pertains not to that depth in which the pure craving for Christ arises—in respect of which Christ is the desire of all nations. It asks, indeed, for a hold of the invisible and the eternal; but it does so with mere fleshly negative conceptions of these, as the unknown opposites of seen and temporal; and not as apprehending in the spiritual the essentially invisible and eternal. Though it demands a religion and solemn transactions with God it can be contented with assumed transactions with an unknown God. It offers homage to the Almighty and Omniscient, as from felt weakness and ignorance; but the sense of weakness and ignorance confessed, though such as would manifest itself in prostration of the human spirit at the presence of a miracle and a mystery, is not what looks for light to the fountain of light,—the "soul waiting for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning." The recognition of sin and the anxiety for an interest in the Atonement manifested may have a certain measure of truth in them; but they amount not to the

spiritual apprehension of the awful reality of man's alienation from God, and therefore they permit the cherishing of a peace which is not true peace—is not oneness with God—is not the experience of the power of the blood of Christ to purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Some sense of the unsheltered feeling of an intelligent being, realising that there is a Supreme Ruler of the universe and yet having no hold of His favour, that voice utters, and with some welcome for any guidance in a path on which that favour may be assumed to rest; but that voice indicates not that deeper sense of desolation which pertains to the human spirit yet ignorant of God—the sense of being an orphan while God is not known as a Father, and which prepares a welcome for Him who comes to reveal the Father. Thus coming short in all respects of the true sense of that need of men which is met by the grace of God in the gift of Christ this craving of the mind has no authority, and however tenderly it may be right to deal with it as it may be connected with

some measure of awakenedness on the subject of religion, we can only regard its clothing the Lord's Supper among Protestants with that practical interest which attaches to the Mass of Romanism as one among the many instances of its influence in substituting superstition for religion; for what, in truth, is this craving, but that sense of the necessity for a religion combined with spiritual ignorance of God which has made man so universally a worshipping being and yet left him not a worshipper in spirit and in truth?

The difficulty I have felt in saying what the nature of the comfort is which is found in the Lord's Supper when that comfort is derived simply from participation in the ordinance and not from the direct faith of Christ, has arisen from this, that that comfort has not, as in the case of the Romanist, a doctrinal foundation, but is really in contradiction to the doctrinal system of those who still cherish it. And this fact presents also the great difficulty in endeavouring to carry their own convictions along

with me. They never say distinctly to themselves why or how they expect good from this ordinance, and therefore though another may correctly interpret their feelings for them they will be slow to receive an interpretation of these feelings which contradicts their system. Yet, if any thing I have said cause any to stand in doubt of themselves in this matter, let me suggest to them to press themselves home with such questions as these:—

1. Does the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, in your meditation of it, speak to you of *Christ?* or does it commend *itself?* Does it suggest what altogether apart from it you possess in Him? or does it promise as to what of Him you are to receive through it? Does it turn your thoughts to Christ as the true interest of all things, the meat which endureth unto Eternal life, to be discerned and fed upon in all occupations of your being? or does it concentrate your interest on itself as the specially appointed medium of your participation in Him?

2. Is the act of participation in the ordinance

as it is your own act what you consciously feel to be, and would have others to recognize as being, the exponent and manifestation of your ordinary manner of existence as a Christian man? or is it an act which has as its object to make good for you a claim to be a Christian man? Is it in harmony with the words, "This do in remembrance of me,"—"Ye do show the Lord's death till he come," a testimony concerning Christ which your personal knowledge of Him qualifies you to give? or is it an act which these words neither describe nor interpret, not being of the nature of a testimony at all, but having its whole import in the participation in Christ assumed to be through that act itself?

3. Is the benefit which you believe yourself to derive from this ordinance resolvable into a quickened faith in Christ as your life, a fuller purpose of heart in cleaving to the Lord, a more vivid realization of your own position, as one who is dead and his life is hid with Christ in God? or is what sense of benefit you cherish referable to your persuasion that, in some way

which you understand not, you have by the act of communion strengthened your hold of Christ; along with, it may be, that feeling of sacredness and worship which associates itself with all exercise of awe and veneration and prostration of the spirit before God even though the unknown God?

I know that questions such as these, in so far as they suggest the desirable answer, are apt to be leading questions to all self-justifying spirits, but this risk is unavoidable, and they may be helpful to those who are really honest with themselves.

The way in which I have just now and throughout spoken of awe and veneration, and the sense of mystery, may suggest the question, "And is it not a commendation of a doctrine or an ordinance, that it provides exercise for awe and veneration? and indeed is not prostration of our reason in the presence of Divine mysteries an element in all worship?"

I have heard it said, that "worship begins where knowledge ends." I cannot receive this

proposition: yet it is not without some relation to truth; inasmuch as, though worship does not begin where knowledge ends, it still does not end where knowledge ends, but always goes consciously beyond knowledge. But, if it be indeed spiritual worship, it is to be described no less justly as worship in the truth than as worship in the spirit; nay, because it is in the spirit therefore it is in the truth; for it is in giving us of His Spirit that God enables us to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Not by darkness but by light is the deepest and most intimate awe awakened in us. That we may be such worshippers as the Father seeketh we are brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light. The spiritual objects visible to us in that light awe us because of what they are spiritually seen to be. Nor is their infinity and our felt inability to comprehend them absolutely, and our feeling that on all hands they go beyond us, an experience which, properly speaking, demands prostration of reason. On the contrary, this experience is that of the highest exercise of reason—spirit-

ually enlightened reason sustaining and justifying worship; justifying worship because of what is known; justifying it beyond what is known because of the believed expansion of what is known beyond knowledge. God is light. In His light He gives us to see light, and to the spiritual eye light is sweet; and is felt to be light, though in its infinite intensity it be light inaccessible. God is love: and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and knoweth God; while yet it is said of the love of God that it passeth knowledge. Nay, as to the divine power put forth in the accomplishing of the divine will in us, that mighty working whereby it is said God subdueth all things unto Himself, the apostle's trust in it is based on experimental knowledge; "according," says he, "to the power which worketh in us;" while yet his expectation from it goes beyond knowledge: he trusts in God, as "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

Earnest continued meditation on what, in reference to feeding upon Christ as the bread of

life, is to my mind a rival and substitute, may have given a minuteness beyond what will awaken interest to my perception and detail of the points which are at once those of parallelism and of difference. I have endeavoured to include the full circle of those to whom the question is a personal one by dealing with the germ and root of the evil, and not merely with its developed forms. The circle thus embraced is a very large one, though the extent of injury sustained be very various; the error which in some is influential enough to characterize their mental position being present in others only as a very subordinate though still hurtful element in their religion.

I have one word to add which concerns us all. I have acknowledged the awe and veneration which are often present in connection with the error which I have been considering, and have endeavoured to indicate how it may be so; while I have vindicated the claim of spiritual light to be the proper source of awe to the human spirit. But why are awe and veneration—which may be

the accompaniments of superstition—so imposing? Why are seriousness, self-restraint, and absorption in religion so easily assumed to imply true piety? Doubtless in part because thought and feeling on the subject of religion are in general so superficial that most men when they see an earnest devout man see one who has gone further in the direction of religion than themselves. He is to them as one listening to a voice which they are disregarding, but to which they yet feel that they also ought to give heed; a voice that comes from a greater depth in man than the voices which they are allowing to engross their attention; and they may easily fail to discern that it is not a voice from the real ultimate depths of man's being. But the voice that comes from that ultimate depth is also in men's ears as well as that other. Man is spoken to from within as to what is religion as truly and as universally as he is as to the necessity for a religion. In truth, what I have spoken of as a voice from a less depth is, in so far as it is a true voice, only that

voice from the ultimate depth imperfectly heard. Therefore, however indiscriminating may be the testimony to mere seriousness which the thoughtless give, we might expect that the presence of a seriousness which arose from true religion, and was obedience to the voice within clearly understood, would lead men to discriminate in this matter, and would draw from them the acknowledgment that this and not that was what they themselves should be, though they are not. I believe that such an expectation is so far warranted that at least it would make a considerable difference ; and that therefore we may say that the fact to which I refer is also in part to be explained by this other fact that men have so little help of living epistles of the grace of God ; the number of such being comparatively so small, and of those that are, the light so feeble.

Let us then seek in this view to realize our calling and our shortcoming. We must believe that the awe and veneration experienced in taking into a man's lips a material substance

which he regards as literally or mystically the body and blood of the Lord, are lean and barren emotions compared with the awe and veneration which accompany conscious feeding upon the living word—the being consciously led by the Spirit of God. The apostle regards "fear and trembling" as the emotions which naturally attend the faith that "God is working in us:" and surely nothing can be conceived more solemn than the sense of being in the hand of God, as clay in the hand of the potter. May it not suggest what we would imagine, were such a thing possible, as the solemn consciousness of man receiving from God his being at first, and with the additional solemnity of the sense of personal responsibility for yielding himself to God. Such an habitual consciousness as that of being spiritually new made—"created anew in Christ Jesus,"—must be the fountain of an habitual awe and solemnity to which the participation, from time to time, in the consecrated elements can bear no comparison in degree, any more than in kind. And certainly the mani-

festation of these feelings should come to others with a proportionally greater weight of authority, commanding in them a clearer inward testimony. Let us therefore consider what, in this respect, is due from us to our fellow men, and what manner of protection from error in this great question as to the Bread of Life, we are thus called to afford to them. One instance of the manifested power of the habitual consciousness of finding Christ's flesh meat indeed, and His blood drink indeed, presented within the circle of those with whom they live, is of inestimably higher value to men than many and clear arguments against the error of the doctrine of the actual presence, and all modifications of it. Let this consideration combine with all else that calls upon us to abide in Christ. Let us seek to abide in Him that men may see in us what manner of awe and veneration dwelling in the light of life awakens. Christians are children of the light and of the day. Light, therefore, is of their birthright. Let our claim to this high birthright be made practically. Let us walk in

the light, and let men learn in us that so to do is not to lean to our own understanding, or to exalt our own intelligence ; that, on the contrary, this is the true prostration of the human spirit before the Father of spirits, who also is the Father of lights. Let the form of our claim to implicit faith be our ready reception of that word the entrance of which giveth light. Let the illustration we offer of the humility that receives the kindgom of heaven as a little child be, not rest in ignorance, but teachableness—"the opening of the ear as the learner," as is prophetically spoken of our Lord.

While we thus propose to ourselves to vindicate against all that would usurp its place the claims of the engrafted word which is able to save our souls, simply by ourselves receiving that word with meekness, trusting to the assurance of Christ—"He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit,"—let us be prepared to meet with many disappointments. In the measure in which through abiding in Christ we bear fruit we shall be

offering to men help—important help, but they will not necessarily profit by it, and we must be contented to go forward through ill report as steadily as through good report. And let us remember how high a thing we are attempting, not only in order that even a little success may encourage us but also that we may not wonder that it is comparatively so little. The question which we press upon men is not that between religion and no religion ; it is the closer question between true religion and what usurps the name. Now I believe that two things have progressed together in this country, viz. an increased realization of the importance of having a religion, and an increased readiness to regard all earnest serious religion as to be held in the same estimation. In proportion as this is the condition of men's minds, being helpful to them in the way of which I speak will be difficult. But if indeed we be on God's side God will acknowledge us : it is not for us to seek to know when, or to what extent. Let us cast ourselves into the treasury of the Lord. The offering will be

much according as it approaches to being all that we have, even all our living. Alas! our offering being thus weighed in the scales of the sanctuary, will not our continual burden be that it is not greater, rather than that our God does not use it more? Let me record it as my painful humbling experience, that, in now dealing with error I have felt myself continually obliged to take it to the light of the ideal of Christianity, that which shines from actual Christianity being too feeble for my need.

SECOND,—*Feeding upon Christ considered as expressing the part of Man's* WILL *in Faith.*

"I am," says our Lord, "the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews, therefore, strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" "Anticipating," says the Romanist, "the unbelieving Protestant." Nay, rather, as we believe, looking at

the subject of the Lord's discourse with that fleshly mind to which the mind that applies His words to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and finds in the doctrine of Transubstantiation a solution of their difficulty, is most akin. It was not the sin of the Jews that understanding the Lord's words they would not believe them; but that, murmuring among themselves, and leaning to their own understanding instead of being taught of God, they understood them not. In assuming that what the Lord called upon the Jews to believe was what they call upon Protestants to believe, Romanists adopt the misunderstanding of the Jews, and identify themselves with their carnal apprehensions, and so are more truly one with them, notwithstanding their receiving what the Jews rejected, than we, whose claim to be found in the exercise of faith in the Lord's words is as confident as that of the Romanists; while we separate ourselves alike from the unbelief of the Jews, and the kind of faith exercised by the Romanists, by accepting our Lord's words in their spiritual import, and re-

ceiving their mystery as a spiritual mystery, to be spiritually discerned.

I will now assume that I have already sufficiently vindicated the Protestant interpretation of the language of our Lord as to eating His flesh and drinking His blood as having reference to the life of faith; and so have prepared the way for considering what light is shed upon the secret of that life by those earnest and solemn expressions, which, while they awe us by their aspect of mystery and difficulty, still make an imperative demand on us to seek entrance into their light. For, as I have said, the conviction that they make such a demand is inevitable if we reflect upon this, that they make a requirement which must be understood in order to be complied with, and compliance with which involves no less momentous an issue than Eternal Life.

We are familiar with the transference to the department of mind of language connected with the dependence of our animal life on meat and drink. We speak of mental food—we speak

also of mental poison. We speak of appetite—of thirst, with reference to knowledge. This use of words, or rather that reality of parallelism between the lower and higher kinds of life which belong to us which leads to this use of words, may help us here; only that we must carefully distinguish between those higher experiences to which this language is usually applied, and that highest human consciousness of feeding to which our Lord's words refer. The desire to be fed with food convenient for us, legitimate as to the lowest form of life in which we partake, rises in dignity, doubtless, as it is cherished with reference to intellectual food: but a higher meaning still is that which belongs to it as the desire of meat enduring unto Eternal Life—the hunger which welcomes the Bread of Life which hath come down from heaven. And it is the more necessary to insist upon this distinction between what is higher in this matter and what is highest, that Christianity used as food for the intellect only is so often assumed to be, in that use of it, spiritual food; and that thus this in-

tellectual feeding upon it comes to be mistaken for the experience of eating and drinking Christ's flesh and blood.

I desire now to conjoin the 4th chapter of the Gospel of St. John (to the 34th verse) with the portion of the 6th chapter with which we have been occupied. In this 4th chapter the spiritual and the natural are most instructively presented to us, in their distinctness and in their parallelism, in the thoughts of our Lord, contrasted first with those of the woman of Samaria, and then with those of the disciples. As we read we are, so to speak, hearing our Lord speaking in the higher spiritual light in which man's need as a spiritual being is visible; while the woman of Samaria and the disciples are heard speaking in the lower light of sight and sense. His asking drink of her, a woman of Samaria, He being a Jew, draws out on her part a reference to the unbrotherly alienation of Jew and Samaritan; while this alienation as it was a form of spiritual death immediately connects itself in His mind with that water of life which is love; her need of

which she was manifesting. Himself that love and the imparter of it, "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Still she understands Him not; nor conceives of other water than that which the well at which they were met afforded. Nor while He goes on to speak in the light of the spirit does she seem at all raised out of sight and sense. "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." His manifestation of supernatural knowledge of her circumstances commanding her acknowledgement of Him as a prophet, with thoughts pertaining to a carnal worship she speaks of the rival claims of that mountain and

of Jerusalem to be the place where men ought to worship. His reply, while claiming for Jerusalem the place which God had given to it, deals with her spiritual nature,—"Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." What response these words had within her we know not; for there is no raising of her up into the spiritual implied in that prostration before the supernatural which she afterwards expressed, saying to her townsmen, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"

Again, His disciples, returning with food, ask Him to eat. To Him, then feeding upon the higher food—that of the Spirit, the proposal

suggests the difference and superiority of that higher food rather than the acceptableness of the material food offered to Him, how great soever His present need might be. He said unto them, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Standing without, as well as the woman of Samaria, in respect of the light in which He dwelt, they said one to another, "Hath any man brought him ought to eat?" "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Most instructive in this record is the tenderness and patience of true spiritual light towards darkness as exhibited in our Lord's dealing with the woman of Samaria, and with the disciples.

But I wait not to dwell on this. What do these words of our Lord, speaking in the light of the spirit, teach us concerning the mystery of spiritual life?—for to that mystery they manifestly guide our thoughts. What help do they afford to us seeking to know what it is to eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood? Much surely. That living water which,

if she had known the gift of God, He said to the woman of Samaria she would have asked of Him and He would have given to her; that water which He said would be in him that received it a well of water springing up into everlasting life could not be so spoken of and be other than that of which He spoke in saying, "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." Neither is the intimation that the true worshippers shall worship in spirit and in truth, for that the Father seeketh such to worship Him, without help to us. To declare the worship which was to be was to declare the salvation that was given; for worship in spirit and in truth can only be rendered by those to whom the gift of God is Eternal Life.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, which we may regard as parallel in its general character to this conversation of our Lord with the woman of Samaria, inasmuch as in both the transition from the one dispensation to the other is set forth in the light of a change in worship, the difference between the priesthood of our Lord, our High

Priest, and that priesthood which gave place to it is expressed in saying, "There ariseth another Priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but *after the power of an endless life.*"

But the most direct light shed by our Lord, upon the meaning of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, is in what He says to His disciples of His own feeding on the will of the Father—that meat which He had to eat which they knew not of. It was their interest in the secret of His spiritual life which caused the Lord thus to make that secret known to them. For their sakes He spoke it. For their guidance as the Captain of their salvation does He say, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Our Lord's uniform intimation of a parallelism between His own relation to the Father and our relation to Himself would justify our receiving these words as light on the secret of our own spiritual life, considered simply as they meet us here; but they immediately connect themselves with His words on that

occasion on which He spoke directly and fully of our relation to Him as the Bread of Life, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Meditating on these words we ask ourselves, "What conception can we form of our Lord's living by the Father?" Yet, unless there be some aspect of that relation of our Lord to the Father which can be visible to us—unless light can shine for us on His living by the Father, this reference to it can afford us no practical guidance. Wonder and awe and intense interest so high a reference must awaken. But unless we are helped to the understanding of that which awakens these feelings the Lord's words will be darkness and not light to us; and our sense of the high nature of that which they intimate will only increase our feeling of darkness. Therefore we welcome the light shed on our Lord's living by the Father, when He says, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work," and we feel that, in connection with these words, the words—"As the

living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me even he shall live by me," are light to us and guidance; and we understand that, as to do the Father's will was the Lord's meat, and so He lived by the Father, so to do the Lord's will must be our meat; and thus shall the word be accomplished in us, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me even he shall live by me;" even as He says in another place, "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love."

While the reference made by our Lord to His own living by the Father, illustrated by His saying that doing the Father's will was His meat, thus sheds light on our living by Him as the Bread of Life, it, at the same time, indicates very clearly both the oneness and the difference of His position and ours; the one Eternal Life being in Him a living by the Father, in us a living by Him. We must seek to apprehend and realise both this oneness and this difference

—the difference of our Lord's position and ours, that we may know our dependence on Him as to salvation;—the oneness, that we may conceive truly of the nature of the salvation which we receive through Him. For His will, on which we are to feed, and His commandments, which we are to keep, are none else than what, as the Father's will, He fed upon, as the Father's commandments, He kept.

Let us combine in our thoughts on this subject the words, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me," with the words, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed;" that is to say, let us connect our Lord's consciousness that doing His Father's will was Eternal Life with His testimony to us that doing His will is Eternal Life to us. In His personal consciousness that the will of God fulfilled in humanity is Eternal Life for humanity, does the Lord testify to men that that is Eternal Life which, in giving Him, the Father has given to them. How does this consciousness utter itself in the urgency and reiteration

of the testimony? It is like (because there also the same personal consciousness utters itself,) "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." This speaking out of His own experience — the good treasure of His own heart—it is that gives to our Lord's words their peculiar power to come home to our hearts; and we hear with all the more gladness and free welcome the voice of the Eternal Wisdom because uttering itself within humanity—the voice of humanity. Our Lord not only speaks with divine authority: He speaks, so to express myself, with human authority also. His humanity pronounces to our humanity as the fixed and certain law of the wellbeing of all humanity that which it is itself through its connection with His Divinity. The comfort to us of faith in our Lord's humanity depends on our faith in His Divinity; for the

interest to us of the Eternal Life seen in His humanity depends on His power to impart it to us —to sustain it in us. But we cannot draw too near to the Eternal Life as it is in Him in seeking to understand what it is to be in ourselves ; neither can we study too closely all that is made visible to us of His living by the Father in order to understand how we are to live by Him.

In proportion as we realize the oneness of the food on which our Lord fed, and on which we feed, that food being the one Eternal Life, to Him the Father's will, to us the Father's will fulfilled in Him, and so His will, we are prepared to recognize the oneness of the process of feeding, in His case doing the Father's will, in our case doing His will ; and my desire is that you should thus see the relation of the *will* to the life of faith, to eating the flesh of the Son of man, and drinking His blood, in the clear light of Eternal Life. For, however clear the light seems to be which is shed upon our Lord's living by the Father, and consequently on our living by Him, by the words, "My meat is to

do the will of him that sent me," I would not feel justified in representing the obedience of the will, the calling Jesus Lord in the Spirit, as the *essence* of the act of feeding upon Christ, were this conception a mere inference from two texts of Scripture thus seemingly related. Indeed, though these verses placed together as I have now placed them are peculiary explicit on this subject, the passages of a similar import are many. But I am not contented that it should stand simply as what the intellect concludes as to the meaning of even many passages. I desire, as I have said, that you should, in the light of the Eternal Life given to us in Christ, see that the oneness of the Eternal Life in Him and in us, implies that, as doing the will of the Father was His meat, doing His will is our meat; and that it is thus that we live by Him as He lived by the Father.

The oneness of the Eternal Life in our Lord and in us to whom He imparts that life implies this. The nature of a salvation which is a life implies it also. For it appears to me a statement

that has its light in itself, that, as spiritual beings, it is by movements of the will that we appropriate spiritual food. Such movements are acts of spiritual eating and drinking, issuing in the consubstantiating of our spirits with that which being received into the will is received into us, into what is, in the most intimate sense, our proper selves, so affecting what we are. For as is our will such are we. It is of the will of God that we are born again: our being born again is the formation in us of a will one with the will of God. By the will we feed on spiritual food; so that whatever is presented to us as spiritual food remains outside of us—is not yet fed upon—so long as the will shuts it out. By the will we feed upon that which is death and not life to our spirits—feeding upon ashes, a deceived heart leading us astray. By the will we feed on the Bread of Life which hath come down from heaven, being taught of the Father and so drawn to the Son. Speaking less strictly, meditation on Christ, occupation of heart and mind with His love—with His work

and its results, may be thought of as feeding upon Christ; but this they are not in themselves. This they imply only in so far as they are issuing in that calling Jesus Lord in the spirit which is the result contemplated in the divine purpose, and is an event in the will.

To understand the place which the will has in our feeding on the Bread of Life which hath come down from heaven is to understand the counsel, "Keep thine heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life:" for to keep the heart aright is to reserve the obedience of the will for that living word which is the utterance of the will of Christ within us. Such yielding up of the will to Christ, and calling Him Lord, is that result of the true knowledge of Himself of which our Lord spoke to the woman of Samaria. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water:" and the result is the fulfilment in us of what He added, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall

never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life:" and this springing up into everlasting life of the living water is, in reference to our relation to God, that worship of the Father in spirit and in truth of which the Lord also spoke to her; for it is the life of the Son in us that ascends to the Father in such worship.

I cannot wait to consider the many passages that naturally come to our recollection and connect themselves with the understanding at which we have arrived as to the meaning of feeding upon Christ, viz., that it is receiving His will to be our will, so receiving His life to be our life; passages which at once illustrate this conception and are illustrated by it. The relation of the branches to the vine, the force of the charge, "Abide in me," the result of so abiding in the flowing in of the life that is in the vine into the branch: all this is recalled and illustrated; and we are taught to cherish the living consciousness of the meeting-place and junction of the branch with the vine, and of the pressure

of the sap of the vine seeking entrance into the branch, and of the freedom of the human will in that we may welcome that living sap, or shut it out, and of our dependence on the teaching of the Father that we may exercise that freedom aright—our dependence on the guidance of the voice which says, "This is my beloved Son: hear him," that we may hear Him and live. These words of the Lord also are recalled to us, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." And the nature of light as affording guidance, revealing a path to walk in; and the nature of obedience to light, as walking in the path revealed; and the nature of the relation to Him that speaks into which we are invited as following Him in a path in which He is walking; all this connects itself with what we have been seeing to be the essence of receiving as a Saviour Him who, "being made perfect, became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

If, in seeking light on the subject of feeding upon Christ, we study the records of the hidden life of Christian men which the journals which they have so often kept present to us, and which are doubtless a part of the riches of the Church, we shall have our attention engaged with much that does not seem to pertain to the region of the will at all; and more especially when need of Christ, and appropriation of Christ, and comfort and peace experienced through such appropriation are spoken of, the language employed is altogether unrelated to the will. We meet confession of sin—rejection of trust in self—realization of the freeness of divine grace. We meet acceptance of the free grace realized and complacency in the way of salvation. Such responses to the free grace of God we meet; but nothing that places before us such actings of the human will as I have now spoken of, and for which I have claimed that they and they alone are, strictly speaking, acts of feeding upon Christ, acts of living by Him as He by the Father. We meet nothing

that indicates discernment of a will of God for man revealed in Christ—a human will one with the divine will—along with the expression of an apprehension of this will as "the bread of life which hath come down from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall never die." We meet no record of acts of feeding upon this will by responding to it, accompanied by the consciousness that such calling of Jesus Lord is the true experience of feeding upon Him. We meet no record of experience that expresses itself by using language in reference to the Lord's will such as He uses as to the Father's will when He says, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me," or that suggests, as being a living illustration of its reality, that connection on which I have dwelt so much of these words with the words, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Such record of eating the flesh of the Son of Man, and drinking His blood, we meet not: and yet such feeding upon Christ there must have been, if

indeed we are reading of branches abiding in Christ the vine, and living by His life; of men of whom it was true that, in living the lives recorded, they lived, yet not they, but Christ in them; of men whom the law of the spirit of the life that is in Christ was making free from the law of sin and death. If of such men we are reading, the acts of will which I have recognized as acts of feeding upon Christ must, however unexpressed, still have been present underlying all that is expressed,—the fruit and result of all that occupation of thought and heart with the grace of God, which is expressed:—I would venture to add, the real ultimate ground and reason of all the peace and confidence before God which we see cherished, being that in the human spirits before us to which the Divine Spirit has borne testimony; for, in so far as the Divine Spirit bore testimony to their spirits that they were the children of God, it must have been because—"as many as are led by the spirit of God they are the sons of God."

How has it come to pass that men spiritually alive should record so much concerning their inward life, and not have led us to this inmost ultimate point of the contact of their will with the will of Christ in submission to it, as the secret of that life? The explanation is partly in the history itself of this bending of the will, viz.: that it is the effect of a spiritual apprehension of Christ which naturally occupies more attention than this its effect; so that the man who, through beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, is changed into the same image, is more occupied with the glory which he is beholding than with the change in himself which it is making; and yet would that glory give him no peace but in working that change. Let him but be disobedient to the heavenly vision, and his peace will forthwith depart. This is partly the explanation. But, doubtless, the explanation is chiefly to be found in the case of the Christians with whose diaries we are most familiar in this country, and to these I specially refer, in the fact of a departure from

the simplicity that is in Christ in their conceptions of justification by faith and of the way in which faith excludes boasting. That in so many instances the form of thought and language alone should bear the impress of such error, while the condition of the heart and spirit is manifestly in harmony with the counsel of God in Christ, is a seeming contradiction, for which we must be thankful. These are instances in which true elements of thought on the subject of salvation have neutralized error; in which also, doubtless, the spiritual quickening of conscience has protected from danger beyond the discernment of the intellect, and saved true and earnest spirits seeking peace with the Father of spirits and harmony—peace and harmony to be found only in consistency with the laws of His spiritual kingdom. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" "What communion hath light with darkness?" "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is so are we in this world." True peace can only have been attained in harmony with these laws of the kingdom of God, whether the language of those who seem partakers in such peace make direct reference to them, or do not.

But what are these quotations from the sacred volume but records of the original Christian experience, that of those who first trusted in Christ? And what are we taught by this direct reference by the early Christians to their participation in the life of Christ and oneness of will with God in Him, in speaking of their peace toward God, while we are not accustomed to it among ourselves? Why, among us, are we left to *infer* such participation and oneness as the ultimate essence of the confidence cherished; and to do so, I may say, in opposition to the literal import of the language used? I have suggested as one reason of that absence

of recognition of the state of the individual's own will, as connected with confidence toward God, which we meet with in the Christian diaries with which we are most familiar, that the Christian is more occupied with the apprehension of Christ which affects his will, than with the consciousness that his will is affected. But, doubtless, this reason existed at the first as well as now; and yet the Apostle, as the most natural utterance of his experience, speaks of both together, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." Therefore the other reason which I suggested, viz.: a departure from the simplicity that is in Christ in the conceptions entertained of justification by faith, and of the way in which faith excludes boasting, demands the more attention. We cannot treat as of small account any difference of apprehension in such a matter between ourselves and the Apostle and those who saw in the same light with him

of such magnitude as to impress itself on the language of Christian men speaking of their inner life, and of their peace toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ; nor can we feel that we have full communion with these first Christians, until we find their language the natural expression of our experiences. In truth, although we believe that many have really found life in feeding upon the will of Christ, while expressing their hope toward God in language that would, strictly interpreted, imply that to them feeding upon Christ consisted in the acknowledgment of Christ's work for them, and not in thus receiving His life to be their life, it is impossible not to fear that many more, not protected by an awakened conscience and quickened spiritual apprehension, have come short of the salvation that is in Christ through placing such mental reference to the work of Christ in the place of that obedience of the will in accomplishing which the knowledge of Him and of His work saves. The day of the Lord will make manifest to what extent the true

feeding upon Christ has thus been hindered. What I recognize in the record of primitive Christianity—what I desire to see, but do not see, even in some of the most unequivocal records of living Christianity with us, is the acknowledgment of the *directness of the demand which the gospel makes on the will.*

I say, the acknowledgment of the *directness* of the demand which the gospel makes on the will. For an *indirect* effect upon the will is admitted, is indeed contended for. "The faith," it is said, "which saves, also sanctifies. It produces not only peace and confidence towards God but also holiness. Not merely is the work of Christ trusted in: His example is also followed. Not only is forgiveness of sin received through His blood, but deliverance from the power of sin by the Spirit is also God's gift to us in Him; and we have no right to regard our faith as a saving faith unless its soundness be proved by the fruit which it bears." Nor am I insensible to much good that has resulted from this manner of teaching, much gain to the cause

of righteousness; gain, I mean, in comparison with what would have been the result if the first half in all this had been insisted upon without the second; if what has been called Justification had been insisted on without what has been called Sanctification. The addition has been a concession to the demand of conscience; and has of course been valuable in proportion as it has been interpreted by an enlightened and quickened conscience. But still the evil has been great. Two things have been spoken of where there is but one thing, laborious efforts at harmony made where identity should be recognised; and a complexity embarrassing to the spirit has been introduced instead of the simplicity that is in Christ.

This is the testimony of God concerning His Son, "that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." To receive this testimony and be taught of God is spiritually to apprehend Eternal Life as manifested in the Son of God, and given to us in Him. The practical demand which in this light is felt to

press upon us is that we welcome this life to be our life; the trust in Christ called for is that we feed on Him as the bread of life; for trust in food is to use it as food, expecting to be nourished by it. Spiritual, doubtless, and as spiritual to be only spiritually discerned, is this way of salvation; but exceedingly simple in the conception of it. The Eternal Life lived by our Lord as the Son of Man is apprehended as the gift of God to man—to us,—therefore our proper life given to us that we may live it. We see it divine, but we see it human also, the life of Christ. We accept the free gift of God, and yield up our will to the will of Christ, our spirit to His spirit; and the end of our God is accomplished. We live: we live the Eternal Life. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness, or record, in himself." We are become living epistles of the grace of God. It is now recorded in our being that God has given to man Eternal Life in His Son. It is recorded in our very being, inasmuch as we are alive with the Eternal Life given in the Son of God. Here I

say is one thing, not two but one, simple and uncompounded viz. a life given, that life received—lived. The elements of this life we may conceive of as many, but as a life it is one thing—the one thing needful; and as it is one thing, so to receive it is one movement of our being, implies one direction of our attention, one thought, one care. With a single eye we may look at it; with a simple and entire purpose of heart cleave to it. What is the relation of this one thing to the two things of which I have spoken? What is this receiving of Eternal Life, this feeding upon Christ, this accepting His will to be our will, this esteeming the elements of His life in humanity, the mind that was in Him, His flesh and His blood, to be meat indeed and drink indeed—what is it in reference to these two great objects of attention, so carefully distinguished, so laboriously and anxiously harmonized? Is it Justification? Is it Sanctification? Is it trust in the work of Christ—that trust which is so carefully separated from every element of self-consciousness or recognition of

any thing acceptable to God on the spiritual condition of the individual? or is it the culture of Christian graces—that culture of them to which a man sets himself as to an employment altogether distinct from his trusting in Christ for salvation? It cannot be both of these if we hold to the distinguishing definitions which are so carefully insisted upon. It is not in fact either, as we shall immediately see if we attempt to make it fit into the definitions of either. Yet is it beyond all question the one great reality, and as such must it include whatever element of spiritual truth is in either.

Trust in Christ there is in this relation of spirit to Him—trust of the most intimate, most fundamental nature, for it is trust in Him as our life; it is really the trust of the branch in the vine—trust for the sap of the vine. But it manifestly is not a movement of the human spirit that can be defined as men have defined justifying faith. For though it has reference to the favour of God as resting upon Christ, and contemplates that favour as life, recognizing the

life given in Christ as indeed life because of that favour,—and so having the merits of Christ, and God's delight in Christ, at the foundation of the peace which accompanies it,—this is not in the way of dividing between participation in the favour that rests on Christ, and participation in the mind of Christ: on the contrary, participation in the mind of Christ it conceives of as that condition of the human spirit to which alone the divine favour can extend. So far is it from conceiving of the faith of the gospel as something as to which we must carefully guard against the idea of its being pleasing or acceptable for his own sake, or indeed being more than the mere thread that in God's plan connects us with that in Christ which is pleasing and acceptable, that on the contrary it recognises the call to faith as a call to that exercise of man's being in which there is most glory given to God; as it is written, "Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God."

Again, the feeding on Christ of which I speak is as truly a culture of all the graces of the

spirit as it is a trust in Christ. But whatever, in the actual experience of men of God, is common to it and to what is recognized as the Sanctification to be added to Justification, a wide distinction holds between them in this, that not as fruits of faith needful to prove that we are justified and so are saved are these graces desired; nor even, as some have said, feeling that they were taking higher ground, as imparting the necessary meetness for heaven; but these graces are desired—the culture of them is engaged in—directly for their own sake, and not as evidences of a saved state but as themselves portions of the salvation received—elements of the Eternal Life given to us in Christ and not the mere meetness to receive that life hereafter.

Therefore I say that the great reality of eating the flesh of the Son of man and drinking His blood is not to be defined either in the language in which men have spoken of Justification, or in that in which they have spoken of Sanctification; though I do not doubt that it

has been present, not unfrequently, in the experience which has been described as the one of these, and also in that which has been described as the other. And to this belief I anxiously cling, feeling thankful for all I meet with in the records of Christian experience which justifies me in clinging to it; for it is manifest that, if obliged to give it up—if obliged to see the peace of many professing trust in Christ through their own definitions of justifying faith or their own views of the place of the graces of the spirit in the Christian scheme,—I could no longer think of them as heirs of the righteousness which is by faith, or as partakers in that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. If their actual confidence towards God, and expectation of acceptance and acknowledgment in drawing near to Him, must be conceived of as strictly according to the belief that God accepts them as righteous without reference to their receiving Christ as their life, on the simple and exclusive ground of their trusting to the merits of His work; or if they must be regarded as

indeed cultivating holiness, truth, love, not for their own sake, nor as the ultimate good and the elements of the salvation given to them in Christ, but just as proofs that their faith is that which secures an interest in the merits of Christ, and so what will secure their salvation,—then are both their confidence of acceptance with God and their practical care to do His commandments alien from the righteousness and the sanctification known to those who are of God in Christ Jesus, and who know Christ as made of God unto them "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

But however liable to abuse, and however often abused, may be the distinction drawn between the intellect and the spirit—between what a man thinks and what a man is—I cannot but be thankful that it has a foundation in truth when I thus consider what, in the matter before us, giving up that distinction would imply. And my conviction is, that to assume a necessity for holding that men's own exposition of the elements of their religious

peace and hope is the true exposition of them would be, in many of the cases in which the language of a wrong system is used, unjust as well as painful.

The words which I have just quoted—"who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," present the one Eternal Life given to us in the Son of God in four elements and aspects. To separate the righteousness spoken of and to represent it as ours on a totally different principle from that on which they are ours, regarding it as imputed while the others are imparted, seems unnatural as an understanding of the Apostle's words, and also a separating between our confidence towards God and our participation in the life of Christ which all real experience of that life would teach men to reject. Yet it may be that the very conviction that the sanctification is something to be wrought in us, and which will be wrought in us, is the real reconciling of the conscience to the faith that the righteousness is only imputed.

So also as to the words—"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," when men contend that these words recognise the co-existence of ungodliness and justifying faith so that a man is pronounced just being actually ungodly, and will not concede to the faith which justifies that it is in itself a godly condition of the human spirit, regarding it as only something which connects the believer with Christ's righteousness; so that, though actually ungodly, he is accounted righteous: it may seem very bold to separate between this intellectual misconception and the state of the man's spirit who contends for it, and so venture to cherish a comfort about him from indications of the one, which seems forbidden by the other. Yet it may be quite discernable that the real ground on which he finds it possible to believe in this imputation of righteousness as co-existent with present ungodliness is, that it is contemplated as a step towards the destruction of ungodliness; so that, though no godli-

ness be recognised in the faith itself, it is regarded as the power which is to produce godliness.

Still, whatever redeeming elements may be present or however conscience may be heard demanding with an authority that will not be gainsayed a righteous character in the peace of mind that claims to be peace with God, there can be no doubt that departure from the simplicity that is in Christ such as we have been considering must be evil, and fruitful of evil.

Those who are acquainted with the terms, "subjective religion," "objective religion," will I trust, see that I am not simply contending for the co-ordinate importance of the former and the latter, or insisting upon the realization of what God calls on us to be as being an element in true religion as essential as the faith of what He calls us to know and believe. If what we are called on to know and believe, the objective in religion, be truly conceived of, that which we are called on to be—the subjective—is already before us; and *to be it*, is the imperative demand

addressed to us by what we know and believe. This indeed seems practically denied when it is felt necessary to say, "It is not enough that you believe what you are required to believe: you must also be what you are required to be." But there can be no doubt that the objective demands the subjective, as truly as the subjective presupposes the objective. My conviction is that there is a departure from the simplicity that is in Christ alike in the conception of what we are taught to believe, and of what we are expected to become in believing.

As to the amount of this departure, I feel it difficult to avoid seeming to say either less or more than what I feel. If I speak of it spiritually, I have such a conviction of the preserving power that is in all earnest actual dealing with God, in self-distrust and self-despair and in that hope only which His free grace inspires, aided by the faithfulness of a quickened conscience, that in expressing my belief as to the extent to which the heart and spirit may be in harmony with the will of God beyond what the intellect appre-

hends of the divine counsel, I am in danger of seeming to make less account of the error of which I have spoken than accords with my persuasion of its magnitude. On the other hand, if I lay out broadly, as I have at present been endeavouring to do, the amount of difference in the intellectual conception of feeding upon Christ as the bread of life, I am in danger of seeming to conclude that if intellectual error be operative at all, the operation of such error as this must be well-nigh fatal.

I must trust for sympathy with me in this difficulty to what consciousness the reader may have of the great duality, so to speak, which is in man viewed as a spiritual and as an intellectual being; and of the slowness of our progress towards perfected and inward unity. I will endeavour to be true to my convictions of the evil considered at once in both its aspects, and call the conditions of mind in which it presents itself superficial and inadequate views of truth.

1. That view of the grace of God I regard as superficial and inadequate which, while it recog-

nizes the freeness of the love of God to man and man's exclusive dependence on what that love spontaneously gives to the rejection of all idea of claim or merit, does not discern in that freeness or in the nature of the gift given enough to exclude boasting on the part of the receiver of the gift. Hence carnal expedients to exclude boasting, and more especially the change in the conception of justifying faith from being that of the reception of Christ as our life to that of a naked trust in His work for man as a ground of acceptance with God.

2. That view of the work of Christ and of the merits of Christ I regard as superficial and inadequate, which, as to the work of Christ, permits us to cherish peace on the ground that that work has been performed apart from the recognition of that call to spiritual participation in it which that work addresses to us; and which as to the merits of Christ calculates on God's rejoicing over a condition of humanity which is not in itself a fit thing for God to rejoice over because of His delight in these merits: while in truth the

delight of God in the merits of Christ can warrant no conclusion other than that He will ever delight in all measures of that condition of humanity of which they are the perfection :— the voice of that delight uttering itself to us, and for our guidance, being "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

3. That view of the Atonement and of the forgiveness of sins I regard as superficial and inadequate which rests in the declared fact of the Atonement and the forgiveness, and which, as to the Atonement, does not apprehend the nature of the condemnation of sin in the flesh which is in the sacrifice of Christ, or the call which it addresses to us to unite ourselves to that condemnation by the rejection of the life of the flesh; and, as to the forgiveness, does not imply any communion in the blood of Christ, any fellowship in His death, any discernment of that power in Christ's blood which the Apostle recognizes when he says, "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the

unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?"

4. Finally, I regard as superficial and inadequate that conception of our relation to Christ as having left us an example that we should walk in His steps which, while recognizing the outward form of His life on earth and in some lower sense also the inward regulation of His life according to the law of righteousness as practical light for our guidance, still leaves a broad gulf between *His* confidence towards God, and *our* confidence towards God. Such a gulf between Him and us is interposed by the erroneous view of Justification by faith, against which I have been contending; for that view introduces a whole system of thought and feeling into the region of our intercourse with God, and that at the very heart of that intercourse, to which there is—there could be nothing parallel in the example of Christ. Consider the mental

elements of justifying faith as it has been defined—the position consciously taken by the human spirit—the nature of the confidence cherished. Nothing of it all is first in Christ—nothing of it is an element in the Eternal Life revealed in Christ. It is no form of the spirit of Christ. The confidence it includes is not one in nature with that which accompanies the spirit of sonship, and is of its essence according to the words, "There is no fear in love—perfect love casteth out fear." This is evident; and I do not suppose that any will contend that the kind of confidence which is held to accompany what is called justifying faith, is one in nature with that of the Son towards the Father. But the conclusion that the conception of the example of Christ which recognizes at this point so great a gulf between Him and us is superficial and inadequate may not be so readily conceded. Yet I cannot judge otherwise as I understand the words of our Lord, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." In fellowship with Him as

the truth and the life is the Lord known as the way. No man cometh unto the Father but by Him, inasmuch as humanity cannot attain to God but in the Eternal Life given in the Son of God. No other conscious condition of humanity is nearness to God but that which is presented to us in the humanity of Christ. For not as a mere permission to come—a personal liberty and warrant to come—are we to conceive of our access to God in Christ, but as a spiritual power to draw near to God in newness of life; as the Apostle says of Jew and Gentile, "Through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father." To sonship are we called in the Son of God. In the confidence inherent in sonship are we called to follow God as dear children walking in love. In the very inmost experience pertaining to our intercourse with God are we to have the consciousness of following our Lord and walking in his steps. If the example left us by our Lord as the first born among many brethren has this extent, can we be called to the exercise of a faith and confidence towards

the Father alien from His and impossible for Him?

I have chosen the expressions "superficial and inadequate," rather than erroneous, because practically, if not logically, they more truly state the fact. And I am not a little anxious that where there is a true trust in Christ in connection with the forms of thought to which I object it should be felt that I am only urging progress in a path already entered upon. It is not any form of self-trust as opposed to trust in Christ for which I call, but a more perfect negation of self-trust, and a more absolute, and deeper, and all-embracing trust in Christ than can be known otherwise; the opposition being not between my own works and Christ's work, but between my own life and Christ's life: that which is given up being, not my works alone but the life of flesh which took form in them; what is recognized and accepted as the gift of God, being not Christ's work alone but the Eternal Life in Christ which took form in His work.

And many and perplexing to the spirit are the confusions which arise from stopping short of this apprehension of justifying faith. Life is said to be in God's favour; and God's favour rests upon Christ. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And, that that favour may rest upon us and so life in God's favour be our portion, the Father's call to us is, "Hear ye him." And so, being taught of God, we listen to the voice of the good Shepherd and His word is fulfilled in us, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life." So we receive life in hearing the Son in obedience to the teaching of the Father; life both as viewed in itself, the fellowship of the mind of Christ, and as viewed with reference to the divine favour—participation in that favour which rests on Christ. So, whether we think of life as the reality in Christ, the law of the spirit of the life that is in Him, or as the favour and acceptance and personal acknowledgment of God, one direction is given to our attention—on one thing is our hope

fixed, viz., that obedience to the will of Christ —that receiving Him as the Lord of our spirits: that eating His flesh and drinking His blood of which I have been speaking.

But if in respect to life as what exists in God's favour, we are directed to keep our minds trusting in what Christ has done, thinking of God as looking at that work of Christ, and not at us at all, while in respect to life as a condition of our own being, we are directed to look to the Spirit of Christ to work in us that holiness without which no man may see the Lord,—surely by such teaching distraction is introduced into our thoughts of life and practical embarrassment into our pursuit of life.

Or, to look at the same reality in an aspect a little different, the divine favour is connected with the region of conscience in man inasmuch as it is there that God expresses to man his pleasure and displeasure. No one denies that while we are without Christ the voice in conscience condemns what we are; and however Scripture may have been instrumental in awaken-

ing conscience, or in helping us to understand the condemnation addressed to us by conscience, no one is regarded as spiritually convinced of sin whose conviction that he is a sinner is not immediate and direct, the result of seeing himself in the light of truth, and not a doctrinal inference from the statements of Scripture. Now what is thus condemned is the life of the flesh—the old man—and ourselves personally as living that life. When, then, another life, the life of Christ, is revealed to us in the Spirit as the Father's gift to us in the Son, and we receive it to be our life, feeding upon Christ, the favour of God resting on this life, and now upon us on our choosing this life, is testified also in the conscience, just as the divine displeasure formerly was; and neither is now the conviction that we are righteous in God's sight, any more than formerly the conviction of sin, a doctrinal inference from the statements of Scripture; but the immediate and direct result of seeing ourselves in the light of truth. *As the divine testimony within was formerly against us, it now is for us,* "the Spirit

itself bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

But adopt the view of Justification to which I have objected, and substitute for this conscious reception of that life on which the divine favour rests and consequent personal sense of divine favour, a mental reference to the work of Christ as ascribed to us and a keeping of our own actual condition out of sight altogether, and manifestly the peace so attained is cherished in the way of a doctrinal inference from statements of Scripture, and is no direct testimony of the conscience at all; neither presents that parallel to the sense of guilt and condemnation which, in the true view, is so close, and gives to the peace enjoyed so deep a foundation.

I have ventured to describe this careful keeping away from the recognition of the consciousness of receiving Christ as our life, when the way in which it comes to pass that the favour of God which rests upon Christ comes to rest upon us, is set forth as a carnal expedient for excluding boasting; for it seems to be suggested

by the fear that we could not without boasting say directly, as the Apostle says, "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God,"—"Herein is our love made perfect that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." I believe that, Christ being revealed in us the hope of glory, boasting will be excluded alike by the consciousness that we have but what we have received, and by the nature of that which we have received; for if we have received Christ to be our life, we, in the deepest sense, have learned of Him who is meek and lowly in heart.

But is boasting excluded by the expedient adopted? To say that it is a carnal expedient —a human device, and not a divine counsel, is to suggest that it is not. And my conviction is, that while true faith excludes boasting because it is in its nature the right position of the spirit towards God, the hope of guarding against boasting by holding that we are not to boast of faith because it is but the link that connects us with that work of Christ in which it is that

God has pleasure, is futile ; for, say to ourselves what we will about it, faith, after all, makes the difference between us and others that believe not, but for whom, as for us, Christ died : and if it were, as on this scheme it would be, an act of acceptance on our part of an arbitrary arrangement, and not a spiritual apprehension of the Eternal Life, there would be room for self-complacency in the consciousness that we had accepted and so done our part ; and in this way the most pure self-righteousness might be present under the guise of the negation of self-righteousness. How true do we thus see the instinct of spiritual men to have been who, in connection with this system, have given earnest warning of the danger of making a Christ of our faith ! Nay, have they not still further manifested distrust in the expedient of their system for excluding boasting, when, after reducing faith to the most naked conception of a link or a thread, that it might not interfere with the place given to the work of Christ, the further security has been had recourse to of regarding

that faith itself as in such a sense the work of God, and a special putting forth of divine power, as that, on that ground also, boasting would be excluded: a view of the origin of faith,—however near the truth of the due recognition of the drawing of the Father,—not in harmony, certainly, with the care taken to preclude the idea of their being any thing of the nature of righteousness inherent in the faith itself.

But may we not say—"Salvation has God appointed for walls and bulwarks." Light is its own wall against darkness. The life of Christ is the light of men. That life saves from boasting the man who receives it to be his life.

The confusion introduced into our thoughts of Eternal Life when the divine favour is separated from the life of Christ and referred to the work of Christ, and we are taught to expect participation in that favour, not in receiving Christ's life to be our life, but in having His work imputed to us; and the corresponding confusion introduced into the region of conscience, when

the divine acknowledgment of the righteousness of faith is regarded as altogether different in its nature from the divine condemnation of sin, and, while the latter is admitted to be a direct testimony of God condemning what we are, the former is represented as not a testimony to the condition of our spirits at all—these practical perplexities introduced into the inner life, in the region of justifying faith, necessarily extend themselves in corresponding forms into the region of worship.

The intimacy of the relation between feeding upon Christ as the bread of life and worshipping God through Christ has already engaged our attention in connection with another error. It comes before us again here; for it could not have been that a wrong conception of Justification by faith could have failed to introduce a wrong conception of praying in Christ's name—of expecting an answer to prayer for Christ's sake.

The conception of Christian worship which has been expressed above, and to which a response in other minds has been hoped for, is, that

it is the Eternal Life in the form of worship—that living acknowledgment of what God is, and hope towards Him in oneness of mind with what He is, which accord with the language—"worship in spirit and in truth." It is the Eternal Life which comes to us through the Son, ascending from us through the Son—the Son in us honouring the Father—the worship of Sonship—as such grateful to the Father, who seeketh such worship. Freedom and confidence of acknowledgment are of the very nature of such worship; arising necessarily from the oneness of the Spirit, causing oneness of mind and will in the worshippers and in Him who is worshipped. In such worship there is a continual living presentation of Christ to the Father—a continual drawing upon the delight of the Father in the Son—the outgoing of a confidence that, whatever is asked in Christ's name—in the light of His name—in the faith of the Father's acknowledgment of that name—will be received. The praises rendered—the desires cherished—the prayers offered—are all within the circle of

the life of Christ, and ascend with the assurance of partaking in the favour which pertains to that life—which rests upon Him who is that life. It is worship according to the words of S. Paul—"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." If we change the language in which we speak of this worship, and, instead of using that of our Lord when He teaches us that what we "ask the Father in his name" shall be given to us, say in the words of the Apostle John, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him," we feel that we have only changed the form of expression, and that it is one confidence which in either way is equally truly expressed; as indeed how could it be otherwise? Our Lord could not put confidence as to the answer of prayer on one footing, and the Apostle put it on another.

But I have said that a wrong conception of justification by faith could not fail to introduce a wrong conception of praying in Christ's name; and we know that, in point of fact, men have followed out a system consistently at the expense of giving to the expressions of our Lord in placing the assurance of an answer to prayer on the ground of its being offered in His name a meaning altogether different from that now assumed according to which these expressions are synonymous with those of the Apostle which rest that assurance on harmony with the divine will in the prayer itself. When, in the close of a prayer, it is added that an answer is expected for Christ's sake and on the ground of His merits, we know that it is not intended by such language to claim for the prayer which has preceded the character of having been offered in Christ's spirit—of having been an utterance of the life of Christ in the worshipper. Were such the meaning intended the use of the words would accord with what our Lord really teaches when He instructs us to pray in His name. But

the sense in which they are employed is altogether different. As men employ them they express a passing away from the character of the prayer itself and a disclaiming of any hope from that character, and a betaking of themselves, on the part of the worshippers, to the name of Christ, as affording a ground of confidence which the spirit of the prayer itself has not furnished. As if, while the Apostle directs attention to the nature and essence of the prayer itself—its harmony with the divine will, our Lord meant to turn us away from this, and to fix our hope on His own merits as affording a confidence altogether independent of harmony with the divine will in the prayer, and which should sustain hope even under the consciousness that the prayer itself had no claim to be heard, nor fitness to awaken a response in the heart of God. The coherence and harmony of a system here is undeniable. As in seeking justification the mind is trained to turn away from its own conscious attitude towards God as the giver of Eternal Life in His Son, to engage

in a mental reference to the imputed work of Christ; so in prayer it is trained to turn away from the spirit and nature of its own cry to God, and to build its hope of an answer on its presenting Christ's merits to the Father as the ground on which it pleads. But just as we have seen that the former mental process differs from that which the Apostle recognizes when he says, "if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God," so is it manifest that the latter mental process differs from that which the same Apostle recognizes when he says, "if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us." And thus the perplexity and confusion introduced into the region of Justification by faith extend themselves into the region of prayer. And our Lord in teaching us to expect an answer because we pray in His name, and the Apostle in teaching us to expect an answer because we ask things according to the Father's will, are made to be to us as two masters presenting to us totally distinct grounds of confidence in drawing near to God.

But the law of the kingdom of God according to which prayer in the name of the Son is answered, and that according to which prayer for things according to the Father's will is answered, are one and the same law. For to ask in the name of the Son is to ask in the light of the name of Him in whom the Father is well-pleased. In answering such prayer God is not granting for Christ's sake what for its own sake He would not grant. He is granting that which His delight in Christ reveals His eternal willingness to grant. In its most imperfect lisping of the Father's name the life of the Son in us is that same life on which in our Lord at the right hand of the Father the light of the Father's countenance ever shines. It is this oneness of the Eternal Life in its feeblest dawn in us, and in its fulness in Christ, which identifies us and our hope and confidence with that fulness "connecting us and glory in one thought," in a way that sometimes presents itself as an explanation of the origin of the faith of the imputation of righteousness. For on this ground

the babe in Christ, in whom the kingdom of heaven is as a grain of mustard seed, is taught to cherish the desire and to offer the prayer into which the life of Christ forms itself with a confidence of acceptance which is according to the faith of the delight of the Father in the Son.

The use which has just been made of the relation between feeding upon Christ as the bread of life and worshipping God through Him, in endeavouring to bring out the evil of erroneous conceptions of Justification by faith and of praying in Christ's name, will recall to my readers the application of it formerly made in considering the subject of the Mass. The parallelism of these spiritual operations—feeding on Christ, and praying through Christ—to the two parts of the Mass was then considered as at once illustrating the relation of these two aspects of the life of faith, and confirming the view that the Mass was in relation to that life, not a witness, as the Lord's Supper is, but a substitute, and any whose intelligent sympathy I

have been receiving will agree with me that we have now met another substitute for the life of faith—a substitute also for that life in both its aspects, as feeding upon Christ, and worshipping through Christ—within the circle of Protestantism,—less gross than the Mass of Romanism, and therefore more suited to an intellectual age, but in being so, only more dangerous to us. The saying of Luther, that if the Pope would allow him to preach Justification by faith he would not object to the Mass, has been referred to above as indicating, that at the time he so spoke he did not clearly apprehend how subversive of the Mass, and of all that is cognate to the Mass, Justification by faith really is. But that preaching Justification by faith should destroy men's belief in the Mass is a result that can be rejoiced in only in so far as it is the truth of Justification by faith which takes the place of that delusion. If indeed men cease from using the consecrated material substance in that service as the food of Eternal Life because it is no longer regarded by them as the

body and blood of the Lord, and, so ceasing, turn to the engrafted word and feed upon it, receiving the life of Christ to be their life, the change is one in which to rejoice; and if men cease to offer the eucharistic offering in the Mass because they no longer believe that therein Christ is offered to the Father, and so ceasing, engage in that worship in spirit and in truth which is the living presentation of Christ to the Father in that worship of sonship which is the worshipping form of the Eternal Life given to us in the Son, this change also is one in which to rejoice. But that the Mass should give place, not to the spiritual reality of which it is the counterfeit, but to an intellectual operation which in reference to the great spiritual reality is but a counterfeit also—in *this* there is nothing in which to rejoice. An intellectual substitute for the life of Christ is not less fatal than a material substitute. The mental operation of reference to Christ's work assumed to be imputed to us is no more able to supply the place of receiving Christ as our life than the

physical operation of feeding upon the material substance assumed to be transubstantiated into the body and blood of the Lord: and the mental pleading of Christ's merits in prayer is no more able to supply the place of praying in the Spirit of Christ than the physical act of offering up the eucharistic offering. The physical substitute for the life of faith assumes a physical mystery. Does not the intellectual substitute assume a moral mystery? The former is without witness in the conscience and is taken upon trust in the way of implicit faith. Is not this true of the latter also? The Romanist receives Transubstantiation, accepting the Scriptures as interpreted by the Church, and feels no need of any corresponding light in conscience. The Protestant who receives imputation of righteousness is accepting the same Scriptures as interpreted by himself, and he also feels no need of a corresponding light in conscience. Let us not be misled by the fact that the latter goes directly to the Scriptures, while the former suffers the Church to come

between him and the Scriptures. However important in other views this difference is it affects not the matter before us. The Church which demands from men implicit faith in her own teaching and forbids their seeking individually to see light in God's light does not err merely because her claim to infallibility is unwarranted: —she would err in making such a demand even were she infallible. And when we go direct to the infallible record, if we regard the inspired men who speak to us there as making a demand for faith such as the Church of Rome makes, reconciling ourselves to the demand because they are inspired, we greatly err. They make no such demand. We may think to honour their inspiration by holding what we understand them to teach not recognizing any need for a corresponding light in conscience; but in so doing we shall be giving to the record of their teaching a place which as living men they did not themselves take. Shall we supersede conscience to make room for the authority of men whose testimony concerning themselves is that

by manifestation of the truth they commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God? These teachers sent from God sought not to supersede the teaching of God. The answer of a good conscience towards God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to which they laboured to raise men is a condition of the human conscience spiritually educated and developed, not a peace in the reception of a moral mystery which has no corresponding light in conscience and is held in a way of implicit faith.

The necessity for our being all taught of God is if possible, a more important subject of thought than that which has now led us to it—at least more radical; but I attempt not to discuss it here. This important consideration it suggests with general reference to what is going on around us, viz. that Protestants take wrong ground with Romanists when controverting the necessity for an infallible Church, evading the conclusions drawn from the diversity of opinion originated by the exercise of the right of private

judgment, and taking their stand upon the abstract truth of the Scriptures; not recognizing the need there is—as surely there is need—in some way to bridge over the gulf between the abstract truth of the record and the certainty that an individual reader of the record has hold of the truth. Protestants do not look this matter full in the face. Surely it is one thing to know that the Bible is true, and another thing to know that I myself am in the light of the truth that is in the Bible. To say I judge for myself as to the meaning of what I read, is, as respects certainty, to say nothing, unless I can add that I myself am infallible. The real fact is that it is not the place of the Bible that the Church of Rome has taken in claiming infallibility, but the place of the living God—whose voice heard and known alone gives individual certainty of being in the light of life. The Romanist looks to the Church to interpret the Scriptures that he may certainly know the meaning of what he reads: the man of God expects and waits upon the teaching of God, and

so expects to understand that which he reads. For in God's light alone does the individual human spirit see light clearly. Spiritual light as natural light is its own witness. Let us who call ourselves Protestants in this matter consider how far in our dealing with Romanists we are found obeying that word of the Lord, "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Until we ourselves give the right place to conscience and the teaching of God we cannot really help Romanists. For of Romanism, however varied the forms of error which it presents, this is the root evil—that it addresses not conscience, neither directs men to the living God, to be taught of Him.

THIRD,—*Development of the Mass from the Lord's Supper.*

If I have carried the reader along with me in the attempt now made to illustrate that feeding upon Christ in the deep movements of the will by which we call Him Lord in the

Spirit I have accomplished my great object. Darkness on this subject is our greatest danger in relation to Romanism, while we have also seen that the error which in Romanism has assumed a form to us gross and palpable exists among ourselves in forms more refined and undefined but tending to the same result; viz., hiding the vital truth that Christ is the Bread of Life, perverting to this end the very ordinance which has been appointed for keeping the sense of this aspect of our relation to Christ fresh and powerful.

What is written will have prepared us for some profitable consideration of the development of the Mass of Romanism from the sacred institution of the Lord's Supper.

How has this development arisen? The question is one of much historical interest, for this development has not been an event in the history of some obscure sect: it very early impressed its character visibly on the worship of the Church, as early liturgies show—though the transition from a figurative to a literal use

of words is not easily marked—and through the great extent of Christendom Transubstantiation came to be held as a dogma, and has affected religion according to the measure in which it has been a faith.

But the solemn interest of the subject is not the greatness of the error for which faith is asked, but the importance of the truth which it is the tendency of that error to hide. This is scarcely felt as it ought to be. Men are occupied with resisting the demand for a prostration of reason made by Transubstantiation rather than with the infinite spiritual loss to which they are exposed by what so powerfully tends to divert faith from Christ as the bread of life.

Apprehending as the inmost aspect of faith that it is a feeding upon Christ in the movements of the will by which we call Him Lord in the Spirit, we understand the character and value of the Lord's Supper as an abiding witness-bearing to our relation to Christ as our life. Its voice is "we are crucified with Christ: nevertheless we

live ; yet not we, but Christ liveth in us : and the life which we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us." It is therefore to be contemplated apart from the ordinary life of faith. Nevertheless, rightly engaged in, it is itself a high exercise of the faith of which it is the confession—a feeding upon Christ as well as a declaration that we live by feeding on Him ; yet this with a special character of its own. Our ordinary feeding upon Christ has its ever-varying aspect determined by the special demands on faith which successively arise in God's ordering of our circumstances, but at the Communion Table we are, as it were, upon the mount of the Lord, above the region in which the daily battle of the life of faith has to be fought : though in the light in which the excellence of that conflict and its high issues are clearly seen and calmly realised, as they cannot be in the fight itself. With all its elements present to our spirits we seal our faith by that special act of personal appropriation of the unsearchable riches which

we have in Christ of which eating the bread and drinking the wine, the symbols of the Lord's body and blood, is the divinely chosen form of expression. To this there is nothing parallel as a confession of Christ except the receiving of Baptism by conscious believers or that highest Godward movement of our spirits on this side of the veil, the faith in death which says "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

In the early church—in men dying daily—the faith which received Baptism and the faith which partook in the Lord's Supper worthily must have been one with the faith in which they would desire to die; and in proportion as it rose to this elevation eating bread and drinking wine at the Table of the Lord, would have a full and perfect meaning, yielding in the highest measure quickening and strength to that life of faith which was confessed. The most simple and naked realisation of the truth to which they were putting their seal in the solemn act of Communion would not fail to enlarge men's hearts to run in the way of God's command-

ments: while it accorded with that grace of God wherein they stood—as it still is the frequent experience of the faithful—that the love confessed would be more abundantly shed abroad in the heart in the time of confessing it. Their bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus filling the ordinance of the Lord's Supper with its true meaning, and that ordinance in its turn sealing and deepening the faith of that death of Christ which it showed forth, these would act and react on each other with intensifying power, and the promise "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength" —a promise to all believing meditation and prayer—would have its highest fulfilment in the experience of all worthy communicants.

It has been said that "no Christian can fail to see in the Lord's Supper the crown of public service and the solemn and chief work of Christian assemblies." It had undeniably this place in the Church at the beginning; and we know that there gradually gathered around the Communion the highest utterances of the collective

life of the Church, and that the naked act of showing forth the Lord's death as He had appointed came to have associated with it praises, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings such as men met together in the light of redeeming love would be moved and emboldened to offer to God: a range of praise, prayer, intercession, and thanksgiving, wide as the free outgoings of hearts dwelling in Christ and partakers in the mind which was in Him. This the earliest liturgies abundantly show.

That all these were originally offered in *the name of Christ*, i.e., in the light of the worshipper's relation to God in Christ—in the faith of Christ's presence at the right hand of the Father, the High Priest over the house of God—we cannot doubt; nor is there any reason to assume as to the ordinance itself with which these utterances of faith in God were thus associated that there was the most remote idea that that ordinance *added* to the ground of confidence embraced in the faith to which it bore witness. The worshippers knew that God had

raised Christ from the dead, and had given Him glory that their faith and hope might be in God: and their faith and hope were in God accordingly. This faith and hope the gospel of their salvation had quickened in them at the first. In this faith and hope they continued to live to God. Therefore at the Lord's Table, with all the elements of their divine life quick in them, abounding in love to God, to each other, and to all men, their life flowed freely, Godward and manward, according to its proper nature.

The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, would mark such seasons by peculiar consolations according to the Church's need. In the record of the martyrdom of St. Stephen we read "He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." We know not how far seasons of worthy participation in the Lord's Supper had their part in educating St. Stephen for this high experience of the grace of the great Comforter; but we must believe that all such strengthening of his faith

had been in harmony with this special strength given for martyrdom—that in his witness-bearing in the Lord's Supper, as in this his highest witness-bearing, his faith contemplated the Son of man at the right hand of God.

We can easily see how the ordinance about which praises and prayers and the highest actings of faith so clustered—ever anticipated as it would be for comfort and enlargement of heart, ever looked back to with the thankful consciousness of renewed strength—however purely and exclusively Christ seen in the Spirit continued to be its interest and value, might come to be thought of and spoken of as identified in the mind with what it symbolised. Without any departure from the simplicity that is in Christ, thanksgivings which were moved by the experience of meeting Him at His Table would take the form of thanksgiving for the sacred ordinance in the use of which this experience had been enjoyed: nor to men abiding in Christ as branches in the vine, and in intercourse with others so abiding, would a need of caution

in their use of words suggest itself, or the fear of a danger of confounding the symbols with what they symbolised. We know among ourselves how Christians at the utmost possible remove from the faith of a presence of Christ in the bread and the wine, real or mystical, use language in relation to the Lord's Supper which as to its mere sound might seem to recognise such a presence. Assuming that in the light of the reality of feeding upon Christ as the bread of life the true function of the Lord's Supper as witnessing for the nature of the Christian life was understood by the early Church and the symbolic character of the bread and the wine recognised, I feel that we might expect language to be used in connection with the consciousness of receiving divine nourishment in the Eucharist analogous to the words of institution. This doubtless was the case ; but no use of such language by the early Christians can prove more than our Lord's own words, prove I mean that if our Lord in speaking of the bread and wine as His body and His blood is not accepted as

implying that the bread and the wine then in His hands were actually His body and His blood, neither can similar words used by the early Church be regarded as having more than a symbolic import.

But though the use of language in reference to symbols which was strictly proper in reference only to that which these symbolised might be safe as well as natural while the speaker spoke in that light of life in which feeding upon Christ was an abiding consciousness, and while as yet the occasional participation in symbols derived its interest from that abiding consciousness to which the use of these bore witness, we know that it came to pass—through what gradual decay of divine life we know not—but it did come to pass that the symbols were in the course of time confounded with and then substituted for what they symbolised. That special quickening and strengthening of the life of faith which was experienced in the worthy partaking of the Lord's Supper came in time to be regarded as a grace received through the bread and the wine :

until at last these came to be regarded as special mediums of life to be partaken in, in order by so doing to receive the life put into them.

When this state of mind in relation to the Lord's Supper was reached—and it may have been reached long before it became the faith of Transubstantiation, and may have passed through the gradually deepening shades of assumed mystical presence by which we see Transubstantiation arrived at now—then a new function in the economy of salvation was ascribed to the sacred ordinance: and this implied a new faith.

The demand for a new faith, distinct from that which receives the gospel and is present in all divine life in us, which the doctrine of a presence of Christ in the bread and wine makes, even when that doctrine has not yet become the doctrine of Transubstantiation, has been noticed above. And this demand separates between the development which we are now tracing and anything that might be regarded as the tendency of religious observances to pass into formalism.

The most beautiful liturgy may become in men's minds a shadow and from their lips an empty sound: but the form remains though emptied of spiritual life. Even when a certain self-righteous feeling, as being engaged in a religious observance, gives a false and delusive interest to the prayers used in words only, still this is without any change in our conception of what the prayers are in themselves. Here the case is different. We might conceive the Holy Communion becoming a form, for acts may be emptied of their meaning as well as words. We might conceive all those full and rich outpourings of the Christian life in connection with the observance of the Lord's Supper to which I have referred as clothing the Eucharist in early ages—these we might conceive of as used in a way of mere formalism. But what we are tracing is not such a dying-out of life from what once had life. To devout worshippers a deep earnest interest continued to belong to the Eucharist;—deep and earnest, however alien from its original interest, and incongruous with its original meaning. The

change we are contemplating is not of a negative character; it is the arising of a new faith.

I have already endeavoured to state some of the elements of religious feeling which I can conceive the Mass used in the honest faith of Transubstantiation capable of quickening. Of course as one without not within I may seem bold in making this attempt. Only there arises a necessity for this boldness if the claims of the doctrine in question are to be fairly weighed and if the mental position of those who hold it is to be understood. In this view we must attempt the task of conceiving truly and correctly the faith which asks our acceptance, that we may know how it has found entrance into and how it keeps possession of the minds of our brethren. Arguments urged not in this light can never help them out of error or really secure our own position.

The element in the faith of Transubstantiation which strikes us most is *mystery*. The conception of a special glory given to God by the faith of mystery appeared in the church at a

very early period; and certainly facilitated the transition from the simplicity and light of the Lord's Supper to the darkness which shrouds the Mass.

We are not to be impatient of mystery—which encompasses us on all sides. Our God gives us light and we are to walk in it and to rejoice in it: but this light seems to have ever beyond it a region of darkness. The light is not on that account less truly *light*, and to be trusted in as light. To permit darkness to bring light into question—to feel sure of nothing because we cannot know all things—is in truth to do violence to the constitution of our being; to which if we are faithful we shall know light to be really light whatever outer circle of darkness may make itself felt by us. Let us thankfully rejoice in the light and let us also reverently submit to the darkness. And let us also welcome that gradual widening of the region of light of which we have experience, the retiring of the circle of encompassing darkness. How far remaining darkness may yet

give place to light now or hereafter in the endless Eternity before us we know not. In the meantime we honour the light by obeying it and in so doing honour God, while we honour Him also by a right aspect of our minds towards the darkness, accepting our limits in the faith of the wise love which appoints them. For if we are giving God glory in what He gives us to know, it will not be difficult to give Him the further glory of being peaceful and at rest concerning the darkness which remains: not doubting that what we know not must be in harmony with what we know; and would be seen by us to be so if God saw it good that the remaining darkness should altogether pass away: if indeed it is possible in the nature of things that it should pass away. For we can believe that much is embraced in the divine consciousness and in the relation of the creature to God which it may be incompatible with creature limits that we should know. Yet on the other hand that is a large word "Then shall we know even as also we are known."

But this aspect of our minds towards mystery and reverent submitting to darkness is altogether different from that glory which was supposed to be given to God by the acceptance of mysteries, and which came very early to be regarded as a very special honouring of God: insomuch that the acceptance of mysteries was regarded as the highest obedience of faith, hesitation to receive mysteries as rebellion of spirit. Faith was a believing on divine authority. In proportion as belief rested exclusively on that authority did it honour God. All that made belief difficult raised the measure of the honour rendered. Mystery seemed appointed for the trial and development of faith. Light exists, darkness exists. The darkness affords the higher opportunity of giving glory to God.

Surely this was an inversion of the divine order. It is light that enables us to give glory to God. What glory He has in our submitting to darkness is properly a glory which the light enables us to give; for it is but one form of

the confidence in God which the light inspires. The submission to darkness which has not this faith in light *underlying it* is but submitting to necessity.

"God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Such words prepare us to find light—not darkness—"the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." But it is in realising the nature of the light given,—that that light is love—that we understand the relative places of light and darkness and what is our right state of mind in regard to each. If the divine light be the divine love, the demand which Revelation makes on the heart should take precedence of that which is made on the understanding. The essence of its utterance, as the voice of the Eternal Father, is to each of us "My Son give me thine heart"—to us collectively "Ye are all brethren." This was understood at the beginning; but it early came to pass that

Revelation was regarded as making its demand on the intellect not on the heart; and the intellect meeting the demand without help from the heart only yielded—it could do no more—submission to the divine authority, and so not love but orthodoxy came to have the supreme value: with hard and most unloving results as we know.

I am not to be understood as undervaluing orthodoxy any more than as rejecting mystery or impatient of intellectual limits, or as at all refusing to believe in the supernatural. What I say is that the divine purpose of love to reveal itself and impart itself not being used as the *key-thought*, a *true* orthodoxy has not been attained, and the acceptance of mystery having a wrong place given to it and a false value, the sense of mystery became a snare; and a religion became possible, and in time was developed, in which obedience in darkness and not the response of love in the light of love has been regarded as the God-glorifying faith. I say a true orthodoxy has not been attained; for the

intellect attempting to systematize the discoveries of Revelation, not in the light of love, could not fail to err, as the blind would do if discoursing of colours. And thus it came to pass that the Incarnation, not seen as the divine love opening for man the fountain of the divine life, occupied men's minds as a mystery by which the intellect was to be exercised, and to which it was to bow, and acceptance of which was to be the test of man's willingness to hear the voice of God. So also the Atonement—the development of the Incarnation as the path of divine love towards its end of quickening the divine life in man—not being seen in the light of love was conceived of in a way that does not bear the light of love when we take it to that light; and so finally the gift of God in Christ, Eternal Life, the accomplished end of the divine love, lost in men's thoughts all its high attributes as that "eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us;" and was lowered to the conception of a deliverance from future misery and the promise of future happiness.

From all this error the light of love would have saved, though this whole outcoming of divine love would still have had to us a side of mystery and incomprehensibleness. Not the Incarnation alone and its development in the Atonement have such a side to us, but also what we might expect to be light only, because it comes within the region of our consciousness, viz. our participation in Eternal Life—this too has its aspect of mystery:—as natural life also has and the manner of our being altogether. That in God we live and move and have our being,—our being, as it has been said, reposing on His being—this realised by faith gives the sense of repose to the consciousness of existence. But how deep is its related mystery. So also that Christ is our life, while it is at once the highest aspect of the great salvation, and, known in conscious experience, the purest light of God into which our spirits are taken, has also its mystery. This we know; and to realise it is not without a certain profit to our spirits. Yet are we children of the light;—the life of love in us

according to its proper nature quickened, nourished, developed, by the light of love.

I have said that mystery is the chief element in the faith of Transubstantiation; and we can scarcely doubt that it has been the extreme development of the conception of glory given to God by the prostration of reason in the presence of mystery which has made possible the development of the Mass from the Lord's Supper. Yet we are not to conceive of the believer in Transubstantiation as having his faith sustained by the sense of mystery alone, or that the feeling of being satisfied to move in darkness in obedience to what is regarded as the voice of God has been enough alone to invest the Mass with the solemn religious interest which it has to devout Romanists. Closely related to the place given to mystery has been the place given to the sense of God's greatness and man's nothingness. This has affected the conception formed of God's glory in the Incarnation, for it has caused that glory to be seen in the divine condescension manifested in the Incarnation, rendering the

essence of the response of faith the sense of weakness and nothingness.

We are weak and in ourselves nothing, and should feel that it is so ; but to feel our nothingness is not, any more than to confess our ignorance, the due response to the voice that in Christ comes to us from the heart of the Father of our spirits to quicken in us the life of Sonship. The condescension that is in the Incarnation is not the love, though it is love that so condescends : neither can we, except in the light of the love itself which has come so near to us in Christ, understand the manner of that nearness—that it is granting to us communion with the Father and the Son in the Spirit.

I say that the condescension is not the love, though it is the love that condescends ; and I believe that this distinction sheds important light on the point of departure from truth in the error that has issued in accepting Transubstantiation as a development of Incarnation. I believe indeed that to see this point of departure clearly is to have the key to the understanding

of much that has been accepted by Romanists as a development of the faith once delivered to the saints; which yet I believe has been a departure from the simplicity that is in Christ. But to attempt to justify this conviction would manifestly be to enter on a very wide field. I must satisfy myself with directing attention to what we are taught when we see Transubstantiation regarded as the development of Incarnation.

The belief that Transubstantiation is the ultimate development of Incarnation seems to have these steps. Taking our nature is infinite condescension. Having taken our nature, to become to us the food of Eternal Life is the same divine condescension in a further and higher manifestation. Therefore whatever glory of God we see in the Incarnation the same glory we see in Transubstantiation and in a higher measure. In this view of a relation of Incarnation to Transubstantiation the faith of the former mystery is a preparation for believing the latter also; and the believers in Transubstantiation

have that faith justified to their minds by the conception of a glory to God in that which is believed as well as made easy by the conception of glory given to God in the acceptance of mystery.

Here, as in regard to mystery, safety would have been found in abiding in the light of love. The assumed relation of Transubstantiation to Incarnation felt to commend itself as condescension is parallel to that real relation of Christ's being our life to the Incarnation which commends itself to our faith in the light of the divine love. Incarnation is a coming near to humanity, the mystery of which may be contemplated chiefly in its aspect of condescension; but the nearness is not so truly conceived of when regarded as greatness condescending to littleness as when contemplated rather as love desiring nearness—union with the objects of the love.

Occupation of mind with the Incarnation, not in the light of the love manifested in the Incarnation, has indeed been full of peril. We have

seen how in consequence "not love but orthodoxy came to have the supreme value;" with the result that "a true orthodoxy has not been attained"—the natural result of studying the counsels of God who is love not in the light of love. Here we are meeting the error which has arisen in the form of a misconception of the *condescension* of God to man manifested in the Incarnation.

Nothing can go beyond the language used as to the greatness of this condescension even when not contemplated in the light of love, the darkness of mystery seeming to magnify it, though this was impossible. The loss sustained has been not under-estimating the degree of condescension but ignorance of the nature of the condescension acknowledged. The condescension of the Father of spirits to us His offspring, in making us partakers in the Eternal Life of Sonship in the Eternal Son, is not told in saying "it is the condescension of infinite greatness to nothingness." Though in one view, we are in relation to Him who has called us into being

nothing ; yet possessing the being which He has bestowed on us, we are, not nothing in His sight but His richest possession known to us. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God." The love that is in the Incarnation is only known perfectly in the light of this its accomplished purpose ; while on the other hand it is the meditation of the Incarnation as the coming forth of divine love that prepares us for understanding this its purpose, enabling us at the same time to understand all that this purpose has involved, and in reference to the error we are now considering to understand how He in whom we have Eternal Life is the bread of life, and what that condescension and love is which this expresses, what manner of nearness of Him who loves to them that are loved, and how that nearness is realised, not in darkness but in light—the purest, highest light —the light which is love. "God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." "God is love; and he that

dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

It does not save us from the consequences of not abiding in the light of the love that is in the Incarnation that the systems devised in the consequent darkness have been, as I may say, gilded with conceptions of benignity and mercy as originating the infinite condescension and pervading all its development. The mystery commended to faith as wonderful condescension has been also commended as merciful condescension. But nothing could restore to Christianity what had been lost at the first in that departure from the simplicity that is in Christ which was in not studying the Incarnation in the light of the love which has come forth in the Incarnation.

I must be satisfied with what I have said now and previously (Part I.) in acknowledgment of the elements of religious feeling which may be connected with the faith of Transubstantiation. I must also remain satisfied with what I have said to show how far these come short of what

is distinctive in the religion of Christ as participation in the life of sonship as that Eternal Life which was with the Father and has been manifested to us. Two aspects of religion I have desired to keep before the reader's mind. First, that our feeding upon Christ in those movements of the will in which we call Him Lord in the spirit is the inmost aspect of the life of faith. Second, that this calling of Jesus Lord in the Spirit is the due development in us of the Incarnation as the coming of the Eternal Son into humanity saying to the Father, "Lo I come to do thy will, thy law is in my heart:" according to the Lord's words "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me even he shall live by me." This is the side or aspect of the truth that Christ is our life which is light to us, and not the less light because of what mystery still remains.

I have noticed above the difficulty of marking the transition from the figurative to a literal use of words in relation to the Lord's Supper—the transference to the sign of what belongs to that

which is signified. Such a transition having taken place, and such a transference being once realised, men's habits of thought have been moulded accordingly ; and we are not to wonder that the same words suggest as their natural and obvious meaning a figurative sense to those who approach them by one path, and a literal sense to those who approach them by another and the opposite path. We meet in early Liturgies the prayer that the Holy Spirit would make the bread the body, and the wine the blood of Christ. Our Lord's words in instituting the ordinance of the Supper were—"This is my body:" "This is my blood." We believe that we are in the light of His words in receiving the bread and wine as symbols of His body, and blood, and in regarding our own act in eating the bread and drinking the wine as symbolic of our feeding upon Christ. Being enabled by the Holy Spirit to partake in the divine ordinance in spirit and truth we are conscious to communion in the body and blood of the Lord, and know that our outward act

has its true inward spiritual meaning in the sight of God who sees the heart. Thus the Holy Spirit makes the bread to be to us the body and the wine the blood of Christ *according to the Lord's meaning in so speaking of them.*

When therefore we meet the prayer that the Holy Spirit would make the bread the body, and the wine the blood of Christ, we understand that prayer according to this our faith and experience; and that the prayer contemplates not an action of the Holy Spirit on the bread and the wine, making them to be the body and the blood of Christ, but an action of the Holy Spirit on the spirits of the faithful making the bread to them the body and the blood of Christ, i.e. making the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine to be to them the occasion of that spiritual feeding on Christ, and communion in His body and blood, apart from which the outward act of communion would be an empty shell. And it is natural for us thus to understand the language of the early Church until we

come, as in time we do come, to some positive dogmatic statement showing that a transition from the symbolic to the literal had already taken place.

We are not however to be surprised that the same words of prayer, approached from the opposite side by men in the faith of Transubstantiation tracing their way back to find the first intimations of that faith, appear to them the unmistakeable expression of their creed in this matter as having been that of the Church when the prayer now considered was first used, and that so retracing the path up to the original institution of the Lord's Supper they read in the same sense the Lord's words in instituting it. That it should be so we can understand; and realising this we feel how impossible it is to decide this great question by a simple appeal to words when the same words are understood on the one side as figurative and symbolic,—on the other side as spoken with a literal meaning. In such a controversy the mere words, as words, determine nothing; and we must decide on other

ground than their sound how we are to take them, whether as figurative or as literal.

In point of fact we do all decide on other grounds. However much we may appeal to what we call "the plain meaning of the words" our confidence really rests on that in the mind in which we read which makes the one meaning rather than the other appear the plain and obvious meaning *to us*. The Romanists who hold the faith of Transubstantiation on what they regard as infallible authority are really resting on that antecedent faith when they say so triumphantly, "what words can be clearer than these, 'This is my body, this is my blood.'" Others not Romanists, neither accepting with them the Infallibility of the Church, but who nevertheless have familiarized their minds with the forms of thought of the earlier ages, and have studied these in the hope of receiving help from them for the understanding of the Scriptures, if they have not been abiding in a light which has enabled them to prove all things, may also come to these words of our Lord with a power of what has

been thought and believed in the Church on their spirits overawing their intelligence: so that though it may not be in the definite form of the Roman Catholic dogma they still, without venturing to define, receive Christ's words as literal, and believe in an action of the Divine Spirit on the bread and the wine, making them to be the body and blood of the Lord; concealing from themselves with a veil of reverence their substantial acceptance of what, under the name of the "Real Presence," is protested against as an error of the Church of Rome.

On the other hand we, in the light of the relation of the life which we live by the faith of the Son of God to the divine life seen in the Son of God Himself, and hearing in that light our Lord's words "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me," and thus coming to the words "This is my body, this is my blood" in the true apprehension of His previous words in declaring to His disciples the nature of the life of faith—"My flesh is meat indeed, my blood is

drink indeed," can only receive the words "This is my body, this is my blood" as spoken figuratively, and as conferring on the bread and wine a symbolic representative character. Our whole conception of Christianity, our whole experience of Christianity, if we are abiding in Christ as living branches in the true vine, living by the life of the vine, renders any other understanding impossible to us. The distance between the two regions—that in which the sign exists, and that in which that which is signified exists—might of itself be enough to prevent any transference to the sign of what is proper to that which is signified. This we feel while admiring the divine fitness of the material sign to symbolize the spiritual reality of the Communion of the body and blood of the Lord. But, apart from this, the life of Sonship given to us in the Son of God, known as the development of the Incarnation in the light of the love manifested in the Incarnation, precludes the possibility of our accepting as a development of the Incarnation that conception of Transubstantiation

which could never have come into existence in the true light of the Divine Love.

When I thus regard as *opposite* paths by which the words of our Lord in instituting the ordinance of the Lord's Supper may be approached the path which men tread in coming to them from Romanism, or forms of thought on this subject akin to Romanism, and that in which we come if we come in the light of Eternal Life, I may seem to be denying the truth of what appear records of the participation in the Eternal Life of the many men of God who have believed in Transubstantiation. I have no such meaning. To trace an error, even so great an error as this to its root, though that root be a wrong conception of the glory of God in the Incarnation is not to deny the possession of a living Christianity to all in whom this error has been found. That error, however serious, has not extended to the whole horizon of their spiritual vision, to the whole of what was their Christianity. Church History would be a study of unmixed bitterness and anguish of spirit to

any to whom serious error in the Church would be as the stopping of the flow of the life of Christ in the Church; but we bless God that so to read the history of the Church would be to limit God and the power of His truth—even when corrupted and mixed with grievous error. Seeking out the evidences of the life of Christ as manifesting itself throughout the ages since His ascension to the right hand of the Father in those who, in whatever intellectual darkness, have called Him Lord in the Spirit, we are continually moved to thank God for contradictions between what men have believed and what men have been. Nor is it in tracing Christianity as a life, in the Church of Rome alone that this is felt. When can it be more intensely felt in the light that God is love than when the Calvinism of Leighton is seen in combination with a spiritual life which makes his words to come nearer than any other to the words of the Holy Apostles of our Lord, in their power to feed spiritual life in us.

In this attempt to shed light on the development of the Mass from the Lord's Supper I have contemplated the Mass chiefly in its relation to Christ as the bread of life—that aspect of Christianity which I have been now seeking to illustrate.

The claim of the Mass to be a sacrifice for sin equally demands attention. It constitutes the only essential difference* between Romanism and Lutheranism as to the faith of the Real Presence, for which it offers an additional and the most important final cause; and it affects the very essence of Christian worship, and our conscious relation to our great High Priest who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment but after the power of an endless life. (Heb. vii. 16.) But what claims to be a sacrifice for sin must be taken to the light of the one sacrifice of Christ perfected on the Cross; our conception of the nature of which it would change and the results

* I venture to say this with the distinction marked by Lutherans before me. See Dr. Martensen's *Christian Dogmatics*, sect. 259-270. Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1806.

of which as our faith accepts them it denies. To attempt this has not been within the scope of my present purpose.

No doubt light shed on our relation to Christ as our life must fall as light on that life in its aspect of worship. Besides, the unity of the faith that Christ is the bread of life with the faith that He is the way to the Father is, as we have seen, so parallelled by the mutual relation of the two aspects of the Mass—their unity as one whole resting on the faith of Transubstantiation —that our attention could not be effectively directed to one part of the subject to the exclusion of the other. But just as I have considered the reality of feeding upon Christ by faith as the proper light to which to take the Mass as claiming to be one form of feeding upon Christ, so must I regard the Atonement as the proper light to which to take the claim of the Mass to be a sacrifice for sin. This is simply taking the Mass to the light of Christianity; instead of accepting it as a part of Christianity.

In choosing on this solemn subject to appeal

to the light of Christianity I do not wish to be understood as depreciating that appeal to reason which is more usual; while I am aware that I am speaking to a narrower circle than I should be were I to place the Mass, viewed simply in itself, in the light of reason, to have its claim on our acceptance judged in that light. I know that in one view the present is a time in which an appeal to reason seems to promise to be the most effective, while in another view, and with the special reference which I have to those in whose case the reaction against the Reformation and in favour of Romanism is seen, I feel that an appeal to reason rather awakens a prejudice. Indeed the development of Protestantism in many quarters into a rejection of all that claims to be supernatural is producing in other quarters what may be called a preference for the supernatural and an acceptance of it as indiscriminate as is the rejection.

It would indeed be wrong to defer to this feeling at the expense of not duly honouring the just demands of reason or of in any measure admit-

ting that a real prostration of reason is ever an honouring of Revelation; which I feel would be to admit that divine light can contradict itself. But, apart from this consideration, in a question affecting religion a Christian man in writing for Christians will naturally take the subject to the light of Christianity as at once the highest light and that which is specially appropriate, and as having the advantage of being ground common to himself and to those he addresses. This course has also the advantage that it affords opportunity for the positive teaching of truth, and promises that special protection from error which there is in the possession of the truth to which the error is most related.

By the "light of Christianity" I mean the light in which those are who are alive to God in Jesus Christ, whether Romanists or Protestants, and I appeal rather to Christian consciousness than merely to the authority of texts of Scripture. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him" and it is confined to them by a necessity in the nature of things. Though the

words of Christ which are spirit and life have light enough in them as presented for faith to justify faith and condemn unbelief, yet is their light fully known only in the obedience of faith —our proving the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. By reason of this difference it is that believers are in relation to the Truth not believers only but also witnesses.

Eternal Life in Christians vindicates its claim to identity with the Eternal Life in Christ by its living response to Christ's words.

When as the revealer of the Father our Lord invites men as weary and heavy laden to come to Him for rest; to take His yoke and learn of Him who is meek and lowly in heart; the divine consciousness of the Son in humanity following the Father as a dear child which utters itself in the words "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" awakens a living echo in all who through Him are partaking in the life of sonship, and following God as dear children walking in love.

Christ said to the woman of Samaria "Who-

soever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water which I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." All in whose experience this word is fulfilled put their seal to its truth. They know that the water which Christ is giving them is indeed "a well of water springing up into everlasting life" and in this consciousness are raised above that thirsting again which follows the drinking of all other waters and the experience of which is the burden of so many human repinings at the unsatisfying character of ordinary life.

In the personal consciousness of the divine life in humanity, and of His own relation to all humanity (S. John, xvii. 2), and seeing men ignorant of that relation and in their ignorance rebelling against it, "feeding on ashes a deceived heart leading them astray," our Lord says, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in

you," "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." The intimacy of participation in what was His own human consciousness which our Lord contemplated for us men is here expressed, as well as the anticipation of His own death through which divine life comes to us. He knew in Himself what humanity can be when filled with the life which was in Him. He saw it as spiritually a dead thing apart from that life. In love He yearns over us to be known in us as our true life. In love He warns us that in no other way can a true life be ours. In love He assures us that His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed. The tone of the living consciousness of meetness to be the food of Eternal Life for man is here. "I am *the* living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Those who are consciously reconciled to God by the death of His Son and saved by His life, will express their experience of salva-

tion in the living testimony that Christ's flesh is meat indeed and His blood is drink indeed. For the consciousness in which our Lord spoke these words has now the corresponding consciousness quickened in them.

The participation in the light of life, present in all such responses to the words of Christ as these we know to be reached under the power of light, not intellectual light merely but spiritual light, which while it has an intellectual form is more than intellect—is spirit and truth. For the history of being thus children of the light and of the day is the quickening of life by the incorruptible seed of the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever—the nourishing of the new born babes by the sincere milk of the word—the feeding with the strong meat of deeper insight into the unsearchable riches of Christ those who are of riper age in the divine life. And with this inward history of light, imparted on God's part and received on man's part, God's outward dealing with men is ever in harmony; things without whether pleasant or

painful being related to the light within as sent for the trial and development of faith. Doubtless the measure of light enjoyed varies greatly, and also the measure of Christian skill in taking outward things to it; but there is this assurance present in all who realise their own position and calling in Christ that they know that they are complete in Him, possessing in Him all things that pertain to life and godliness.

If therefore the claim of the Mass on faith is brought as a new thing before such persons, and engages their serious attention, there are two questions either or both of which they will naturally consider; Does the proposed addition to their Christianity imply incompleteness in Christianity? and does it harmonize with Christianity? As to the first question, the very conception of the Mass implies that Christianity apart from it would be defective in a very high degree. As to the other question, it becomes equally clear, when we consider the new faith to which we are called, that it is altogether alien from all that we know as

Christianity. And these answers must be conclusive.

Those however who from the first of their religious consciousness have thought of the Mass only as a part and a highly important part of Christianity, having so received it from the Church, are likely to find it most difficult to take up this question at all; it so involves the previous question of the authority of the Church as claiming obedience of faith to her teaching. But even if they should feel emboldened to treat the question as an open question, the very measure of Christian life from which we might expect an exercise of Christian discernment and a spiritual judgment may really prove a weight in the opposite scale to truth. For all their feelings to Christ quickened and sustained by their living faith in Him will have been habitually overflowing to that ordinance His presence in which has been assumed. How difficult must it ever be to persuade such persons to propose to themselves to distinguish between what Christ is to them apart from the Mass and what the

naked faith of the Mass can rightly be regarded as adding thereto. And even if they can be induced to make the attempt they are likely to refer to the Mass feelings which they have taken to it; nay, they will probably even regard these feelings as a legitimate confirmation of their faith in its divine reality.

Yet if such spiritual men, at home in the divine life, exercise a free spiritual discernment in looking at Christianity apart from the Mass and at the Mass apart from Christianity, the solemn truth may dawn upon them that they have hitherto been combining two faiths alien the one from the other. And if this perception is once reached the possibility of continuing such a combination will cease.

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